



Security Council

Seventy-third year

8323rd meeting

Thursday, 2 August 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Samson
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Security Council, to His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Council for the month of July. I think it was an outstanding presidency by our Swedish colleagues and I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing our deep appreciation to Ambassador Skoog and all of the Swedish team for the great diplomatic skill, imagination and flair with which they conducted the Council's business last month. I thank them very much.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: We meet at an important time. It has been two years — two years too long — since the Yemeni people had the chance for a negotiated end to this war. Today, therefore, as we meet we have the chance to weigh the opportunities for peace and, I hope, to begin the difficult and uncertain journey away from war.

Earlier this week I had the privilege to meet with a man who has lived the mission of peace and of reconciliation. I am referring to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait. I cannot easily remember someone who has so successfully confronted the challenge of war and then of peace, which he succeeded at, and who has so

clearly shown us how to move from one to the other. He speaks so movingly of the process by which his country was rescued, including by the Coalition, and then formed a constructive relationship with Iraq.

Recently, and despite all our efforts, the pace of the war has increased. We meet at a time when the focus of the war is the battle for Al-Hudaydah. What military people tell me about Al-Hudaydah is that it has become the centre of gravity of the war. The Red Sea now is also a theatre of war. We have tried to find a way to avoid a battle for the city and the port of Al-Hudaydah, and we are still trying. But even though the requirements for such an arrangement are not yet met, it is to be noted that our efforts, with the Council's unified support, have managed to narrow the gap between the two sides in ways that nobody expected.

What is clear to me now is that this issue — the resolution to the specific crisis in Al-Hudaydah — has a better chance of being resolved within the context of a comprehensive political settlement. What does that mean for us today? I think it means that it is time long past for us, together, to call for an early resumption of the political process, which has lasted two years since the last round in Kuwait. My principal message and request to the Council today is that we urge the parties to resolve this conflict through negotiation rather than through military means, which is a sentiment that members of the Council have consistently expressed in recent months.

After having consulted with the parties, I plan therefore to invite them to Geneva on 6 September for a first round of consultations. These consultations will provide the opportunity for the parties, among other things, to discuss the framework for negotiations and to agree on relevant confidence-building measures and specific plans for moving the process forward. I ask for the Council's support in this. In that connection, our engagements with women's groups, as well as southern stakeholders, are crucial to the success of future consultations. As is set out in resolution 2216 (2015), I would aim for as inclusive a process as possible.

I did not come lightly to this decision. I have based this on the advice given to me by Yemenis from all quarters in the months since assuming my responsibilities. I have engaged primarily with the parties, but also with civil society. I am especially grateful for my meetings with Yemeni women as I continue to consult with them on elements of the peace

process. Their voices unsurprisingly and consistently remind us that Yemeni families bear the brunt of this conflict and want it to be done with.

I know from that engagement that a political solution to this war, in line with the relevant resolutions of the Council, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and the national dialogue outcome, is available, as I have said before to the Council. We know what can work. We have heard it from all sides. We have talked to all of them, and we have studied the experience of past efforts to resolve this conflict. As the Amir was reminding me the other day, 100 days in Kuwait is an enormously valuable guide for us.

An end to this war cannot come too soon for the people of Yemen. As our humanitarian colleagues are quick to remind us — and I am sure John Ging will do so — if we do not succeed together in putting an end to it, there will be millions more Yemenis depending on the assistance of our humanitarian agencies. I am very conscious, as we all are, that each day costs lives that we might have saved, and that people could have been alive who are not today had we acted earlier.

I would like to speak for a moment about what is happening in Yemen. On Al-Hudaydah, as already mentioned, we have made progress, particularly with regards to a United Nations role in the port, which was agreed with me by the leadership of Ansar Allah some weeks ago. This does not mean, however, that the gap is closed. The gap is not closed. We will continue our efforts to find a peaceful solution in that regard. This progress is due to the serious cooperation I have received from all sides as well as the Security Council's active support.

I continue to enjoy the close cooperation and support of the Government of Yemen and its leadership, which is always an important engaging primary partner, as well as the leadership of the coalition. I have also had a series of constructive and positive meetings with the senior leadership of Ansar Allah. These relationships are absolutely key to any potential success we may expect in the endeavour of reaching a political settlement. The nurturing of relationships is the primary task of somebody in my position. Let us therefore not throw away what we have achieved on Al-Hudaydah. I am determined to build on it in our consultations. As I have been reminded, let us not allow progress or the absence of it on Al-Hudaydah deter us

from our primary focus, which is on the search for a political solution to this conflict.

I am concerned that Al-Hudaydah could be a flashpoint. I take seriously any offer of de-escalation, regardless of its magnitude, including the unilateral offer from Ansar Allah to stop all attacks on shipping. Many of us would not have wanted those attacks to have happened at all. My concern is to avoid any action with dire humanitarian consequences, in particular those by my Office that may undermine the resumption of the political process in September. I therefore call on the parties, perhaps with the support of the Security Council, to create an environment conducive — and I use these words carefully — a conducive environment to allow for this to happen.

On other matters, I am greatly encouraged by the common desire of the parties to have the many thousands of prisoners of war released. My Office has been hard at work on this issue. On each occasion that I have met with President Mansour Hadi Mansour, he has particularly urged us to take a lead on this issue, which I think is a tribute to his humanity. I know that we all want to see forward movement in this area as soon as possible.

I would like to conclude by summing up my requests to the Security Council. First, I would ask for support for my effort to begin consultations in September in Geneva. Secondly, I would like support for de-escalation in Al-Hudaydah — and to keep the Red Sea out of the conflict. Thirdly, I ask for support for those measures — I have mentioned one, the release of prisoners, but there are many others — that bring hope back to the people of Yemen. It is the people of Yemen who will ensure that we have a good chance of making the political negotiations work. Without their involvement, interests, advocacy and support, we will not make it. They need encouragement to believe that this can happen. Fourthly, I would ask Council members, as I know they will, to join me in recognizing the extraordinary courage of the international humanitarian organizations working in the country. I have had the privilege in my frequent visits to Yemen of witnessing first hand their courage, diligence, reliability, independence and impartiality. It is an exceptional privilege for all of us to be colleagues.

Finally, through you, Madam President, I would like to thank the Security Council for the extraordinary level of support that it has provided to my efforts. It

makes an enormous difference to have a united and eloquent Council asserting the principles of the United Nations. The Council's continued unity is, by any standards, the key to the resolution of this conflict.

The President: I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ging.

Mr. Ging: More than three years have elapsed since the beginning of this conflict, and throughout this time civilians in Yemen have been facing and bearing the deplorable consequences of the conflict. We have heard the statistics many times. More than 22 million people — 75 per cent of the population, in fact — require humanitarian assistance and protection. Three years of conflict have left 2 million people displaced from their homes; 8.4 million people do not know where their next meal is coming from; and the worst cholera outbreak in the world occurred in the country last year, with 1.1 million cases. The humanitarian situation is indeed shocking both in scale and severity, and these figures represent an urgent call to action.

In my briefing today I will focus on the humanitarian situation in Al-Hudaydah, the expansion of humanitarian operations across the country, obstacles that humanitarian workers are facing and the impact of the conflict on civilians.

Conflict in Al-Hudaydah governorate has escalated significantly. Earlier today, we received reports that attacks occurred around the entrance to one of the few functioning public hospitals in Al-Hudaydah and an adjacent fish market, causing civilian casualties. Since 1 June, violence has forced more than 340,000 people from their homes across the governorate. Most are taking shelter in host communities near their areas of origin, while smaller numbers have arrived in Sana'a, Aden and surrounding areas.

Sustained hostilities in Al-Hudaydah city, interruptions to port operations or a siege of the city would be catastrophic and must be avoided. There is no contingency plan that can effectively protect civilians from dire humanitarian consequences if conflict in Al-Hudaydah escalates, as the capacity of international organizations and their response will quickly be overwhelmed. In addition, it is important to recall that Al-Hudaydah was the epicentre of last year's devastating cholera outbreak, and cholera infections in the city are currently rising. It is therefore essential to bear this in mind when considering incidents like the

one reported today, which affect public hospitals where humanitarian partners are treating cholera patients.

Last week, air strikes hit water facilities in Al-Hudaydah city and sanitation facilities south of the city. Water and sanitation lines have also been damaged in Al-Hudaydah as forces in the city dig trenches. As we all know, damage to health, water and sanitation infrastructure significantly increases the risks of the spread of cholera.

Al-Hudaydah and nearby Saleef are the lifeline for the majority of imports of the essential commodities of food and fuel needed by millions of Yemenis every day to survive. I am pleased to update the Security Council that these ports remain open and operational. In fact, commercial food imports in May rose to their highest levels since November 2016 and fully met requirements. However, food and fuel imports fell in June and again in July. While keeping all ports open is critical, we are equally concerned about maintaining adequate quantities of affordable imports through these ports. To do so, the conditions must be created whereby shipping companies have enough commercial confidence to continue supplying them.

As conflict has escalated in Al-Hudaydah, humanitarian workers have stayed and delivered, and we thank the Special Envoy for his recognition of this fact. About 90 per cent of people displaced by recent violence have in fact received emergency relief packages. These packages contain food, hygiene supplies and other items intended to preserve dignity. Within this, humanitarian partners are also providing additional assistance to the most vulnerable, including food rations, cash, basic household items and shelter supplies. Programmes also continue in Al-Hudaydah to provide medicines, equipment and staff to health facilities, maintain water and sanitation infrastructure, and truck water to displaced people who cannot access piped networks.

In addition to efforts in Al-Hudaydah, regular humanitarian programmes have expanded significantly across the country. They are working in difficult and dangerous conditions. In June, the international humanitarian effort provided emergency food assistance to 7.5 million people — an increase of 200,000 people since January. It also provided water, sanitation and hygiene services that benefited 6.3 million people — a 60 per cent increase since January. Similar increases have taken place in other sectors. As of mid-year,

about 60 per cent of the people whom we are targeting with assistance had been reached, and humanitarian partners continue to work tirelessly to expand their programmes further.

Partnerships have played a very important role in this expansion. This year, 169 front-line partners — United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations and Yemeni non-governmental organizations — are working together to reach millions of people every month. Assistance is coordinated through hubs in Aden, Al-Hudaydah, Ibb, Sa'ada and Sana'a. A sixth hub will open soon in Mukalla.

Generous and flexible funding has also been key to this scale up. The humanitarian response plan, which has been recently sequenced to show first-line, second-line and full-response activities, has received more than 60 per cent of the required \$3 billion. A large part of that funding came early in the year through a \$930 million unearmarked contribution from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, the United States, Kuwait, the United Kingdom and Germany are among the most generous donors this year.

Notwithstanding the continuous scaling up of humanitarian operations, serious obstacles persist. Inside Yemen, humanitarian personnel face numerous restrictions, particularly in areas controlled by decision-makers in Sana'a. These include delays in movements, detention of staff and supplies, attempts to influence the selection of beneficiaries and implementing partners, and other harassment. The Yemen humanitarian country team is doing a tireless and commendable job to engage decision-makers at all levels to ensure that aid is safely delivered to the people who need it across the country. However, more support is needed to overcome those obstacles to humanitarian access, including bureaucratic impediments.

The toll of this conflict on civilians and civilian infrastructure is devastating. Incidents in which civilians are killed or injured continue to be reported with alarming regularity. I have already mentioned several recent incidents, including today's, that damaged critical civilian infrastructure in Al-Hudaydah and their consequences. In addition, in Sa'ada, a water facility was hit for the third time in July, depriving over 10,000 people access to water. Last week, air strikes in Al-Hudaydah hit sites very close to humanitarian premises, causing structural damage. In a separate incident, air strikes landed less than 500 metres from

United Nations premises. All parties must respect international humanitarian law, including the obligation to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to take all feasible precautions to avoid and minimize incidental harm. We also call on the parties not to use civilian sites for military purposes and to allow civilians to leave conflict-affected areas safely and voluntarily.

Finally, all parties must seize the current opportunity for dialogue and work with the Special Envoy to achieve a lasting political settlement and sustainable peace. Humanitarian assistance — however effective and large-scale — cannot mitigate the destructive effect of conflict on every facet of daily life. The Yemeni people have suffered too much for too long. An end to this conflict is long overdue.

The President: I thank Mr. Ging for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): We congratulate you, Madam President, on your country's accession to the presidency of the Security Council this month. We also congratulate the Swedish delegation on its work with such a busy schedule in July.

We are glad to see Mr. Griffiths in the Chamber again. Yesterday, I said to him, and I really believe, that the Council is fully united in its support for him. We truly and strongly stand with him. Both parties need to understand that there is no gap in the Security Council when it comes to supporting him and to making sure that both parties understand that they need to work with him. We therefore absolutely welcome the invitation to both sides to participate in Geneva. We look forward to the outcome and to their positive response.

I think that we must look at the situation. We have long been truly lucky because, if members look at what is happening now, we were already upset and wanted to condemn the Houthi attack on the Saudi oil tanker. That was already considered an issue. The ballistic missile strikes were already considered a problem. We always said that if something did not let up, someone would get hurt.

We have continued to say that the Panel of Experts on Yemen have affirmed that Iran is supplying the Houthis. They are just as much to blame as the Houthis. However, today there was another attack. The idea that a Saudi-led coalition carried out air strikes today against a fish market and a hospital in Al-Hudaydah

that may have caused dozens of casualties now brings us to a new day in Yemen. We have reached a new sense of urgency in Yemen that — if that is what is starting to happen — civilians and infrastructure are at risk.

As the international community, we have to demand that the two parties come together and understand the seriousness of the situation. I think that, as we face that, we will be very anxious to hear how the talks go. However, I think that we as the Council and as members need to remind both of them that civilian casualties, civilian infrastructure and anything that relates to that is a concern. The idea that strikes almost hit some of the water tanks, given the cholera outbreak, and all such things are starting to show a disregard for the people on the ground at a time where they are already suffering so much. We once again emphasize that Al-Hudaydah port must stay open. There must be access so that humanitarian aid can come in. However, we strongly support the talks in Geneva. In fact, we think that they cannot take place soon enough in view of what has been happening in the past few days.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to wish you every success. Through you, we would also like to thank the delegation of Sweden for its outstanding presidency of the Council last month.

Of course, we thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging for their valuable and important briefings on the political, security and humanitarian developments in Yemen. In my statement, I will focus on the political and security developments, in addition to the humanitarian situation and the responsibility shouldered by the Security Council.

With regard to the security and political developments, we listened earlier to Mr. Griffiths talk about the outcome of his recent rounds of talks and meetings following the efforts made to restore order in the port city of Al-Hudaydah. His meetings included those with the Yemeni parties, as well as a number of visits to the countries of the region, the most recent of which was to the State of Kuwait, in addition to the initiative that he proposed to the Yemeni parties to hold the next round of talks in Geneva. We would like to emphasize our support for his efforts and

those of the United Nations in resolving the conflict in Yemen peacefully.

The State of Kuwait underscores that there is no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. There is only a political settlement, which is underpinned by the three political terms of reference: the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference, and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2216 (2015). Any peace plan that is not supported by those pillars complicates and prolongs the crisis, with repercussions for regional and international security and stability.

On the security level, despite the coalition's announcement that it will halt its military operations to restore the port city Al-Hudaydah and bring it under the control of the legitimate Yemeni Government so as to ensure the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen a better opportunity to find a peaceful solution, the Houthis have continued to deliberately target civilian sites and inhabited areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, using ballistic missiles. To date, they have launched a total of 163 missiles, in addition to more than 66,000 explosive devices targeting civilian properties and resulting in humanitarian and material losses. The Houthi militias now employ new threats and challenge the resolve of the international community by targeting the security of international maritime navigation in Bab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea — either by planting maritime mines or by targeting commercial ships and oil tankers, the most recent of which was the targeting of two Saudi ships last week using anti-ship missiles. We were on the brink of an environmental catastrophe in the region as a result of the abuse by the Houthis of Al-Hudaydah port as a launchpad for such attacks.

The State of Kuwait reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of those ballistic missile attacks by the Houthi militias on the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the neighbouring countries. They also threaten the safety of international maritime navigation in Bab Al-Mandab and the Red Sea. That is a clear threat to international and regional peace and security. In that regard, we support the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all measures undertaken to maintain its security and stability. We commend the decision of the Kingdom to issue 25,000 visas to Yemeni pilgrims from all the Yemeni directorates and governorates, without exception or discrimination.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, the donor conference on the humanitarian situation in Yemen, which was held in Geneva in April under the auspices of the United Nations, Switzerland and Sweden and led to approximately \$2 billion in pledges, had a positive impact, reflecting the interest of the international community in preventing the humanitarian situation in Yemen from deteriorating further, particularly in the areas under the control of the Houthis. However, the Houthis' control over the city and port of Al-Hudaydah and over the delivery of humanitarian assistance could undermine the purposes of the donor conference and only lead to further humanitarian suffering in Yemen. In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the pledges we made in April have been fully honoured. We have handed over a total of \$250 million to various organizations, agencies and international funds in order to alleviate the suffering of all the Yemeni people.

In relation to the responsibility shouldered by the Security Council, it must maintain its united and firm position with regard to the Yemeni situation. The Council's message to the Yemeni parties, in particular the Houthis, must clearly emphasize the following points.

First, it is unacceptable to continue ignoring the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), and to maintain such intransigence by not committing to constructively engaging in the political process, in addition to favouring personal interests over the general interests of the Yemeni people.

Secondly, we cannot accept the continuing ballistic missile attacks on neighbouring countries or threats to international maritime routes, which will have an impact on regional and international peace and security.

Thirdly, using civilians as human shields, exploiting civilian facilities as bases for launching military operations and continuing to recruit children all amount to war crimes, which are punishable under international law.

Fourthly, it is important to cooperate with the United Nations in order to ensure safe delivery and full distribution of the humanitarian assistance throughout Yemen, and to not subject its field staff to any harm.

Today, Thursday, 2 August, is the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Iraqi occupation of the State of Kuwait. The way the Security Council dealt with that

situation was a historic landmark and demonstrated the ability of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. The full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions had a great impact on lessening the duration of that crisis and the time frame for the restoration of Kuwait's legitimate sovereignty over its territories. The Iraqi invasion of the State of Kuwait sent a clear message to the international community that if a State loses its sovereignty over its territories that would have serious repercussions and a catastrophic impact on international peace and security. It would be remiss on our part not to reiterate our utmost appreciation to the sisterly and friendly States, in particular the international Coalition of the 33 countries that supported our right, defended international legitimacy and made substantial sacrifices in order to liberate the State of Kuwait.

In this regard, we reiterate that it is important for the efforts aimed at ending the Yemeni crisis to be based on a political solution under the three terms of reference that I cited earlier in order to ensure the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, as well as non-interference in its internal affairs.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, as well as John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their informative briefings and their commitment, as well as that of their teams. They have our full support.

In response to their interventions, I would like to return to two points: first, the situation in Al-Hudaydah, which necessitates the protection of civilians and the guarantee of safe, complete and unhindered humanitarian access; and, secondly, the essential need for a negotiated political solution — the only way out of the crisis in Al-Hudaydah and, more broadly, the conflict in Yemen.

First, the situation in Al-Hudaydah remains very fragile and the recent upsurge of violence is worrying. We are extremely concerned about today's two-pronged attack near the main Al-Hudaydah hospital, which caused many casualties among civilians. We once again reiterate the priority of France for the protection of staff and medical facilities, as recalled in the political declaration of 30 October 2017. We would

like that the circumstances surrounding that attack be fully clarified.

We again call on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. That is essential in order to prevent the civilian population, who is already suffering the worst current humanitarian crisis, from becoming the primary victim of the clashes. Many have fled the fighting in Al-Hudaydah, with nearly 121,000 displaced persons, according to the figures of the International Organization for Migration and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It is absolutely essential that the displaced be able to safely cross the front lines and have unhindered access to humanitarian assistance. All ports and airports, including Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports and Sana'a airport, must be kept open and operational.

On Houthi territory, international and local humanitarian partners must also have safe access to those in need. We reaffirm our commitment to the freedom of movement in the Bab Al-Mandab strait, which must be ensured. In that regard, we condemn the Houthi attacks that targeted two Saudi tankers on 25 July. We have noted the announcement by the Houthis of the temporary suspension of their military activities in the Red Sea. That is a first step in the right direction. The high level of violence in Al-Hudaydah and elsewhere in the country threatens to undermine over the long term the political momentum of the efforts of Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

Secondly, as the Security Council regularly reiterates, there is no military solution in Yemen. The political process remains the only possibility for the country to emerge from a conflict that has lasted too long. The United Nations mediation plays a central role in reviving the peace negotiations. France renews its full and complete support for the efforts of the Special Envoy to relaunch the dialogue between the parties with a view to an agreement on the management of Al-Hudaydah port, the resumption of talks, a lasting cessation of hostilities and the definition of the parameters of a political resolution.

We therefore call once again on the parties, for their part, to commit in good faith to a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement, particularly in the run-up to the Geneva conference, in which it is essential that all parties participate. We also encourage Yemen's

regional partners to constructively support that process. The objective of the Security Council must be to ensure a cessation of hostilities and to maintain the pressure on the parties in that regard in order to promote the momentum launched by the Special Envoy.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We, too, would like to begin by congratulating the United Kingdom on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. We wish you, Madam President, every success and assure you of our support. We would also once again like to congratulate the Swedish delegation for the successful discharge of the presidency during the month of July.

In addition, we welcome the convening of this meeting, and we thank Mr. Martin Griffiths and Mr. John Ging for their briefings. Peru applauds and supports their tireless efforts, together with their teams, to find a solution to the conflict in Yemen and to protect the population under extremely difficult circumstances. We believe that it is important for the Council to discuss the issue transparently, reporting on the ongoing efforts to prevent escalations and to put an end to a conflict that has no military solution and that has brought about the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today.

Peru deplores the ongoing violence and suffering. At this juncture, we are concerned about the risks to Al-Hudaydah, the port of entry for the food, medical supplies and fuel containers that Yemenis depend on. We also deplore the fact that as the Panel of Experts on Yemen mandated by resolution 2342 (2017) reports, all the parties to the conflict continue to violate international law and international humanitarian law, as well as specific mandates of the Council on the conflict in Yemen. The most recent violations are the coalition's bombings of civilian infrastructure in Al-Hudaydah, including the health, water and sanitation services that are crucial to coping with the new cholera outbreak. Just today there were attacks on a market and near a hospital. This must stop.

Peru firmly condemns the crimes committed by the Houthi rebels, including the indiscriminate firing of rockets at urban centres in Saudi Arabia, the planting of anti-personnel mines and attacks on vessels in the Red Sea. However, we must emphasize that any response must comply with international law, and any claims to a military solution must be ruled out, considering that they entail the risk of aggravating an already disastrous

humanitarian situation. The reality is that there is no humanitarian plan B if Al-Hudaydah port collapses, and there is no guarantee that an offensive will not result in that collapse. As Mr. Ging reminded us, many of the people's needs are still unmet despite the commendable humanitarian efforts. We must be consistent in our responsibility to protect them, including by preventing further escalation. If not, we run the risk of pushing the people's support to the rebels and generally turning to the violent extremism that leads to terrorism. We emphasize that the ports and airports must remain open and operational, in accordance with the Council's provisions. And humanitarian aid and the people's access to it cannot and should not be made conditional on any military objectives.

We would like to highlight the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to restore dialogue and build trust between the parties, with a view to achieving a ceasefire and facilitating a political solution. We believe that his work should have the full and unanimous support of the Council and the international community. We welcome the announcement of the forthcoming meeting in Geneva between representatives of the Government of Yemen and the Houthis, which we hope will enable us to make progress towards a political solution. We emphasize the importance of ensuring that the parties commit in good faith and without prior conditions and that they act pragmatically, moderately and quickly. We also emphasize how important it is that countries with influence on the parties to the conflict use their diplomatic efforts, and we welcome the work being done in that regard.

Lastly, we would like to point out that the achieving a sustainable peace will require broad consensus on a shared vision for the future. In that regard, it is important to ensure that the process is inclusive and that all sectors of Yemen's population are represented, particularly women and young people.

I would like to conclude by recalling the words of the Executive Director of UNICEF when she recently visited the country and learned that more than 11 million children are at risk. She said that there is no justification for continuing this carnage.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank you personally, Madam President, and the United Kingdom delegation for convening today's meeting. We are grateful to Mr. Griffiths, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-

General, for his comprehensive report on the efforts to bring the positions of the parties to the conflict in Yemen closer and work for a resumption of the negotiation process. We have great hopes for Mr. Griffiths's ability to help the parties realize the futility and unviability of a military solution. We thank Mr. Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for his briefing, which shows clearly that Yemen and its people are enduring a massive humanitarian disaster.

We fully support the Special Envoy's initiative to launch intra-Yemeni consultations in Geneva in September. In our view it is desperately needed and represents a unique chance to end this bloody war. However, it will be important to ensure that as we get closer to the negotiations, every key stakeholder is available to help the parties find common denominators. In our view, maintaining a calm atmosphere around Al-Hudaydah and refraining from offensive action would facilitate the implementation of this initiative. Everyone must show restraint and reject any resort to force. We agree with the Special Envoy that what is needed is de-escalation and measures to build trust, including freeing prisoners and detainees. We would add that we need to unite the efforts of every Yemen in combating terrorism on the Arabian Peninsula. We should point out that from the very beginning of the military operation we have emphasized that Al-Hudaydah port, and Yemen's other ports, must be able to function reliably, since there are no alternative routes into the country for a steady and uninterrupted flow of humanitarian and commercial cargoes.

Restraint is all the more essential in view of the fact that two thirds of the people of Yemen are in need of help. The civilian infrastructure lies in ruins and the country is facing a new cholera epidemic. In that regard, it will be vital to continue the humanitarian efforts. We have noted the courageous work being done by United Nations humanitarian personnel, as well as the independent contributions of a number of Member States, including Yemen's nearest neighbours. Russia has also been providing assistance to the people of Yemen through both Sana'a and Aden.

But it is obvious to all of us that humanitarian efforts are not enough to bring the conflict to an end, and neither is military action. We all agree that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. It is essential that we shift the focus on the current

situation to a political dialogue. The Special Envoy has a key role to play in this, and we support his efforts, including through practical efforts with the parties aimed at getting them to cooperate closely with the United Nations. It is important that he work in Yemen in person, maintaining a direct dialogue with all the main Yemeni and regional players. The potential for collective international assistance to the Special Envoy's efforts is far from being fully utilized, in our opinion, and we still need to come up with a capable, balanced and focused format for supporting efforts through the United Nations, which — and this is crucial — will act on a consolidated basis.

We would like to emphasize that establishing a political process in Yemen would be an important contribution to stabilizing the situation throughout the subregion. We would like to recall our proposal for launching a process for developing a package of security and confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf and eventually the entire Middle East. This type of structure, in which every key country of the region should participate — including the Gulf States and Iran — could not only help to strengthen universal, comprehensive and undivided security in that part of the world but also resolve long-standing and new crisis situations, including the conflict in Yemen. Threats and clashes must give way to dialogue and cooperation. We must get to work right away on joint efforts to restore a healthier atmosphere, which incidentally would make a tremendous contribution to helping Mr. Griffiths succeed. Russia will continue to consult with all interested parties with the aim of implementing our concept of security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf, which we believe is urgent and essential.

In conclusion, we urge all the parties involved in the conflict in Yemen to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Mr. Griffiths's proposal to organize negotiations in Geneva in early September, the success of which will be facilitated by a rejection of military action and a willingness to work for a political settlement. And the only priority should be a concern for the interests of the people of Yemen.

Mr. Vaverka (Sweden): Madam President, as this is our first open meeting under the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council, allow me to take this opportunity to wish you the very best for the month ahead. We look forward to working with you and your team and assure you of our full cooperation.

I also want to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his important briefing to the Council today. We fully support the efforts to forge a political agreement to end the conflict in Yemen. I also thank the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging, for his comprehensive briefing on the humanitarian situation in the country.

Let me turn first to the political situation. We commend Special Envoy Griffiths on his determined and active diplomatic efforts, including his important visits to Yemen and the region. These efforts have helped create a window of opportunity to restart negotiations on Al-Hudaydah and on a wider political settlement to end this conflict and the intolerable suffering of the civilian population. All parties must seize this opportunity and engage sincerely and constructively with the Envoy in good faith and without preconditions.

We call for an overall de-escalation to create an environment conducive to talks. This includes a halt to missile attacks and threats against shipping in the Red Sea, as well as air strikes and fighting in civilian areas — actions that we have repeatedly condemned.

The Council must also increase its efforts to encourage engagement and de-escalation by the parties. We echo the call of the Special Envoy on the parties to, first, fully suspend or freeze the fighting in Al-Hudaydah; secondly, engage in the upcoming political consultations in Geneva based on the Envoy's framework presented to the Council on 18 June; thirdly, ensure the effective inclusion and participation of women in any political consultations; fourthly, respect international humanitarian law, including as concerns the protection of civilians and medical care, as well as ensuring humanitarian access; and, fifthly, exchange detainees and prisoners detained as a result of the conflict, as a confidence-building measure.

I would now like to turn to the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. As we just heard from Mr. Ging, 22 million people, or three out of every four Yemenis, are in need of humanitarian assistance or protection. We share the concerns outlined by Mr. Ging in his briefing. Let me pause here to join the Special Envoy and others in praising the work of the many brave humanitarians on the ground. We are encouraged to see the Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports open and functioning. As they are a lifeline for millions of Yemenis, it is essential that they remain that way. At the same time, we are concerned

by reports of the risk of reduced commercial imports, including food and fuel.

The continued pause in the offensive is encouraging. However, the reported escalation last week, including in Al-Hudaydah, is cause for concern. Like others, we are deeply concerned by the reported attack this morning on a hospital and a fish market in Al-Hudaydah, which has reportedly led to a significant loss of life.

As we have repeatedly heard from the United Nations and its partners, a full-scale offensive against Al-Hudaydah would aggravate the humanitarian disaster even further, put hundreds of thousands of lives at risk and pose the threat of a new, widespread cholera epidemic and famine. Urban warfare or a siege would be equally catastrophic.

Since the outbreak of the conflict three years ago, 3 million children have been born in Yemen. Al-Hudaydah alone is home to 300,000 children. We are deeply troubled by the disastrous effects of the humanitarian situation for children in Al-Hudaydah and beyond, including the risk of stunting, which was already staggeringly high in Yemen before the crisis began. As we agreed during the debate on children and armed conflict held on 9 July (see S/PV.8305), when the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2427 (2018), we have a responsibility to do all we can to protect children trapped in conflict. The best way to do so in Yemen is by preventing the conflict from entering its fourth year.

Mr. Llorentz Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, Madam President, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council and pledge our full support to you. I, too, wish to congratulate the delegation of Sweden for having so successfully and professionally guided the work of the Council last month.

My delegation would like also to express its appreciation for the briefing by the Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Griffiths, and reiterates its support for his efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen. We are also grateful for the informative briefing delivered by the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Ging.

Our delegation has consistently stated in the Council its belief that there can be no military

solution to the conflict in Yemen. We are concerned by the increase in violence in various cities around the country, in particular in Al-Hudaydah governorate. As Mr. Griffiths stated so eloquently,

(*spoke in English*)

"the pace of war has increased".

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Moreover, Mr. Ging's report made clear the fact that the humanitarian situation is unravelling. According to a UNICEF report of 31 July, the incidents that affected civilians during the military campaign in Al-Hudaydah governorate have led to the displacement of more than 121,000 people, who lost their means of subsistence and now depend completely on humanitarian assistance to survive.

Moreover, according to a report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees dated 31 July, the indiscriminate attacks on the districts of Al-Tuhayat and Zabid, in Al-Hudaydah governorate, resulted in more than 59 civilian casualties during the first half of the month of July. Unfortunately, 50 per cent of the incidents were caused by airstrikes, followed by shelling.

The impact in the short and medium term of an attack against or an interruption in Al-Hudaydah port operations delivering humanitarian assistance and imported goods could be devastating for the more than 20 million people who need such assistance in order to survive. As the country is on the verge of famine, an attack against or the closing of Al-Hudaydah port would mean condemning those people to die of starvation. As we heard in the briefing, Al-Hudaydah is the centre of gravity of the war.

We express our deep concern at and condemn the indiscriminate air strikes and bombings carried out in the past month against civilian and medical facilities throughout the country. Today, as other members of the Council noted, there were attacks against a market and a hospital in the city of Al-Hudaydah, which killed many people and wounded a number of others. We are particularly alarmed by the structural damage caused to health-care, water and sanitation facilities in Al-Tuhadat, Zabid and Saada. That damage and the possible interruption in water and sanitation services increases the threat of a massive cholera outbreak, with devastating humanitarian consequences.

We therefore reject and condemn any indiscriminate attack against the civilian population, including the launching of missiles, the laying of anti-personnel mines and air strikes against civilian infrastructure, including public spaces, health-care facilities and residences. We call on the parties and actors involved to comply with the provisions of resolution 2286 (2016), on the protection of civilians and medical personnel in armed conflict, and refrain from using the civilian population, humanitarian personnel and health-care facilities as military targets. All parties must meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and ensure the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance.

It is vital that the parties abide by the presidential statements of 15 June 2017 (S/PRST/2017/7) and 15 March 2018 (S/PRST/2018/5) and fully implement resolution 2216 (2015), without any preconditions, in order to ensure the resumption of dialogue, the immediate cessation of all hostilities and a good-faith commitment to a negotiation process leading to a political solution that meets the needs and aspirations of the Yemeni people, in the framework of respect for their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We reiterate to all parties the importance of ensuring that ports and airports and the access routes thereto remain fully operational, especially Al-Hudaydah and Saleef ports and Sana'a airport, as they are lifelines for the survival of the population.

Finally, my delegation, after hearing the report of the Special Envoy, reiterates, as our other colleagues have done, its fullest support for his efforts at mediation and the promotion of dialogue, and, of course, our firm support for the convening of the conference to be held in Geneva in September.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Like others before me, my delegation would like to congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Council and assure it of its support. We also congratulate Sweden on its excellent work during its presidency last month. And we would like to thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for the quality of their briefings on the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen.

Côte d'Ivoire continues to be concerned about the political impasse and increasing violence seen in Yemen

in July. We urge the opposing sides to exercise restraint, and we welcome the halt to the bombing and the Houthis' suspension of their attacks in the Red Sea. We call on the parties to the conflict to redouble their efforts to support the peace initiatives that are under way. Côte d'Ivoire also welcomes the acceptance of the Special Envoy's good offices by the parties to the conflict and all the countries that have influence on the opposing parties with a view to establishing a lasting ceasefire so as to enable intra-Yemeni peace negotiations. In that regard, we reiterate our support to the Special Envoy's proposal to transfer the management of the port of Al-Hudaydah to a committee supervised by the United Nations, a solution that could make a significant contribution to reducing tensions between the parties and could be a starting point for the settlement of a conflict that has led to the loss of so many human lives.

The humanitarian situation is also a continuing source of concern for my delegation. We especially deplore the attacks on civilian infrastructure, particularly water supply services, which are compromising the efforts to prevent new cholera epidemics in Yemen. In the face of this alarming situation, my delegation calls on the parties to show restraint, respect international humanitarian law and protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. We reiterate our call for a de-escalation of the fighting that would give humanitarian aid unimpeded access to civilians in Yemen in the port city of Al-Hudaydah and every region of the country.

Côte d'Ivoire reiterates its belief that there can be no alternative to a political settlement to the crisis in Yemen. We therefore once again invites all stakeholders to end hostilities and commit constructively to a political settlement to the crisis in order to end the impasse plaguing the country. We call on the international community to support the efforts by the Special Envoy for Yemen to bring the parties to the negotiating table and thereby give new impetus to a political dialogue in the country.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China congratulates the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We thank Sweden for its work and its presidency of the Security Council in July. China is also grateful to Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Director John Ging for their briefings.

The conflict in Yemen has been going on for more than three years and political negotiations have remained stalled for nearly two. The situation there has

continued to have a profound impact on regional peace and security. The escalated conflict in Al-Hudaydah and other areas, and the increased risks of famine and cholera outbreaks, have aggravated the country's humanitarian crisis. That is a situation that neither the Yemeni people, the countries of the region nor the international community can endure.

The fundamental way to achieve lasting peace in Yemen is through a political settlement. The Special Envoy has recently been closely engaging with the Yemeni parties and countries of the region in his shadow-diplomacy efforts and working tirelessly to prevent the situation in Al-Hudaydah from evolving into a bigger crisis. We support his intensified mediation efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table and push them to cease hostilities and go back to seeking a political settlement and achieving peace, security and stability in Yemen as soon as possible. The Special Envoy will organize and preside over a meeting in Geneva in early September that will be open to all Yemeni parties and an important opportunity for peace in Yemen. We support his efforts in that regard and hope that all the parties in Yemen will show good will and seize this opportunity and try seriously to address differences through dialogue and consultation, break the impasse without delay and genuinely relaunch political negotiations in Yemen. The international community and the countries of the region should help by lending their constructive support.

Yemen is currently in the grip of a dire humanitarian situation. The parties to the conflict should take steps to ensure safe, swift and unimpeded humanitarian access and create conditions conducive to easing the humanitarian situation. China opposes any action that targets civilians or expands or exacerbates the conflict, and the international community should step up its humanitarian assistance to relieve the suffering of the Yemeni people. Not long ago, at the opening meeting of the eighth ministerial meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum recently, President Xi Jinping of China announced another \$600 million in aid to the people of Yemen, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, in support of humanitarian and reconstruction work on the ground.

China supports Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We urge all parties in Yemen to work through dialogue and negotiation on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its

implementation mechanism, and the outcome document of Yemen's National Dialogue Conference so as to reach an inclusive solution as soon as possible. China stands ready to join the rest of the international community in supporting the Special Envoy's work and will continue to play a constructive role in facilitating a political settlement of the problem of Yemen.

Ms. Samson (Netherlands): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to assure you and your team of our support. We would also like to thank Sweden for its excellent steering of the Council's work in July. I would like to express our sincere thanks to both briefers, Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and John Ging, Director of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). As the fighting in Yemen continues, their briefings instil in us a strong sense of urgency.

My statement will focus on three aspects: first, the political process, including the situation in Al-Hudaydah; secondly, the humanitarian consequences of the conflict; and thirdly, our concerns about the lack of respect for international humanitarian law in Yemen.

First, with regard to the political process, the Kingdom of the Netherlands remains very concerned about the ongoing hostilities in and around the port and city of Al-Hudaydah and the impact of that escalation on the prospects for negotiations. We fully support the Special Envoy's efforts to come to a peaceful solution for Al-Hudaydah, as well as the broader Yemeni conflict, and we support his calls to the parties. We urge all the parties to engage constructively with the Special Envoy without preconditions, and we expect all of them to fully commit to the United Nations-facilitated process by participating in consultations in Geneva in early September, as Mr. Griffiths just mentioned. We also support his call for all the parties to create an environment conducive to such a meeting and to de-escalation in Al-Hudaydah.

No political agreement is likely to last if local grievances and regional divisions are not addressed. The political process must therefore be an inclusive one, and we welcome the commitment to that end that the Special Envoy just expressed. An inclusive political process should encompass a broad range of Yemeni groups, with the meaningful participation of women, young people and civil society. We encourage the

United Nations to further engage with them and look forward to more information on that in future briefings.

Secondly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we echo the concerns raised by Mr. Ging of OCHA in his briefing about the effects of a protracted fight for the city and port of Al-Hudaydah. The humanitarian consequences for the inhabitants of Al-Hudaydah city are expected to be severe, and the same is true for the population of northern Yemen, which is so dependent for its very existence on humanitarian and commercial imports through Al-Hudaydah port.

In line with the Security Council's March presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/5), we call for the full and sustained opening of the ports of Al-Hudaydah and Saleef, as well as the unimpeded distribution of supplies throughout the country, which includes access for ships carrying containers and fuel, as facilitated by the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism. The use of sea mines around the port and attacks on commercial vessels by the Houthis further contribute to the risks for commercial and humanitarian shipping, and we condemn such practices. The longer the future of Al-Hudaydah remains unclear, the less willing will commercial shippers be to deliver to Yemen. And there is no viable plan B should Al-Hudaydah port be further compromised.

That brings me to my third point, the importance of respect for international humanitarian law. In recent weeks we have seen the number of civilian casualties rise, mostly as a result of the fighting around Al-Hudaydah, but also in Aden, Taiz and Sa'dah. The obligations of all parties under international humanitarian law are clear and, as the Security Council has repeatedly done, we once again call on them to fully respect those obligations. In this regard, we condemn the Houthis' continued firing of ballistic missiles at civilian targets. The recent strikes on health and water-sanitation facilities, and today's reports of strikes on a fish market and Al-Thawra Hospital in Al-Hudaydah, are equally worrying. Damage to the vulnerable water-sanitation system in Al-Hudaydah could immediately trigger a new cholera outbreak, as the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator underlined in her statement on Sunday. All parties have an obligation to protect civilian infrastructure and humanitarian workers. The humanitarian community continues to work under increasingly difficult circumstances, and for that it deserves our praise, support and protection.

The Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was mandated by the Human Rights Council to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and human rights and to identify those responsible. We reiterate our call on all parties to continue to engage with the Group and provide it with unfettered access. Its work remains ever more crucial as the conflict rages on.

In conclusion, we call on all the parties to take responsibility and engage constructively with the Special Envoy in order to come to an agreement. We stand ready to support the United Nations-facilitated political process, which remains the only way to a sustainable peaceful solution to the crisis in Yemen.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to thank the delegation of Sweden for its leadership of the presidency of the Security Council in July. I also want to wish you, Madam President, and your delegation all the best for success during your presidency, and to assure you of my delegation's support. We thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for his briefing, and support his proposal for consultations between the parties in Geneva. We also thank Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for his comprehensive briefing, which provided a very timely explanation of the real and difficult situation that Yemen is facing.

My delegation has followed with concern the developments in Yemen since the beginning of the conflict, which has claimed many human lives and displaced thousands, leading to an unprecedented humanitarian crisis that has jeopardized the sustainability of the lives of the 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, of whom more than 8.4 million, including children and women, are in a very serious situation and in urgent need of food supplies. We share the concerns expressed by other Council members about today's attacks on a market and a nearby hospital that have claimed human lives.

Humanitarian organizations have been warning us about the tragic humanitarian situation in Yemen. After more than three years of war, and particularly now, in the wake of the latest offensives against the key city of Al-Hudaydah, the entire country is closer to famine than ever before. All of this is happening as cholera is striking with greater force. The World

Health Organization (WHO) says that Al-Hudaydah has recorded the highest numbers of suspected cholera cases since the original outbreak began in April 2017. In this regard, we welcome the admirable contributions of OCHA and the WHO, particularly in view of the fact that they have had to provide even more medical supplies and vital services. In the face of this critical situation, we are concerned about the 3 million internally displaced persons who have been forced to flee their homes by the conflict. In that regard, we urge the Security Council and the relevant parties to make concerted efforts to provide safe and unhindered humanitarian access in order to help create the conditions necessary to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

The stalemate of the political situation in Yemen is a cause for concern for Equatorial Guinea. The military conflict rages on, the steps taken in the political process have been inadequate and the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, so it is important that the parties involved in the crisis understand that a political process, conducted through direct, frank and inclusive dialogue, is the only way to find a lasting solution to this grave situation.

My delegation therefore continues to welcome the approach that Mr. Griffiths outlined to the Council on 18 June, which not only updated us on Al-Hudaydah but also set out a framework for the resumption of political negotiations, to be guided by a set of principles based on the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative, the results of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015), which should include groups from the South, civil society and women, as well as discussions aimed at addressing political and security issues as part of a package.

Finally, we call for the conflict to be resolved with negotiations, not weapons. We applaud and appreciate the work of the Security Council, which, despite the difficulties, continues to devise strategies to restore peace and stability in Yemen.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and to assure you of our full support. I would also like to thank the delegation of Sweden for leading the Council through the month of July in an exemplary manner. I would like to thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths and Mr. John Ging,

Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for their informative briefings.

I would like to begin by taking this opportunity to express our enormous appreciation to OCHA and the United Nations staff members and international humanitarian personnel who continue to provide life-saving assistance to the Yemeni people in extremely challenging circumstances.

Poland fully support the Special Envoy's framework for political dialogue in Yemen. We once again call for the resumption of an inclusive intra-Yemeni political process aimed at achieving a political solution to the conflict. We welcome the fact that the first round of the negotiations is scheduled to take place in Geneva in September. The parties to the conflict must cease to engage in violence and refrain from taking further action that could lead to additional displacement, casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure and disruptions of humanitarian and commercial access. All parties and stakeholders must abide by the principles of international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of civilians. Children in particular must be taken under special protection from the atrocities of war.

It is with great concern that we have received reports of air strikes in Al-Hudaydah in the past few hours, including an attack on the city's main hospital and fish market. We are alarmed by the escalation of violence, which further increases the humanitarian cost of the conflict and poses a real risk to the prospect of peace talks. We reiterate our full support for the Special Envoy's efforts to find a solution to the situation in Al-Hudaydah and we urge the parties to engage constructively with him to demonstrate flexibility. We expect those involved to make the necessary effort to reach a compromise on the management of the city and its port. It will be crucial to prevent a fully fledged attack on Al-Hudaydah, which would further deteriorate the humanitarian situation, not only in the city itself, but across the entire country.

We note that there have been three successful vessel discharges of food and fuel in Al-Hudaydah in recent weeks. However, that is simply not enough to provide life-saving assistance to 22 million Yemenis. We therefore call on all parties involved to guarantee that all of Yemen's ports are fully operational. It is crucial to ensure unimpeded access to humanitarian deliveries

throughout the country. Access for humanitarian and medical personnel to people in need inside Al-Hudaydah city and the surrounding districts must be guaranteed, and safe passage ensured for those who wish to leave the city.

Let me conclude by underscoring that there cannot be any military solution to the conflict in Yemen. I reiterate Poland's strong support for the Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, and for his efforts to bring about an inclusive political solution to this tragic conflict.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to join others in taking this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to congratulate Sweden on its successful presidency last month. We thank Special Envoy Martin Griffiths for his useful briefing and his continued diplomatic efforts to facilitate a peaceful solution to the Yemeni crisis. We are also grateful to Director John Ging for his briefing. We commend the tireless efforts of the Special Envoy and his shuttle diplomacy with the parties. It is indeed encouraging that he has been able to have positive and constructive discussions with them. We hope that the upcoming discussions in Geneva will yield positive results. We support his diplomatic endeavours and the negotiation framework that he has laid out, which gives priority to addressing the issue of Al-Hudaydah as a first step to resuming political dialogue. We encourage the parties to continue their constructive engagement with the Special Envoy.

Meanwhile, we note that Al-Hudaydah port remains open and operational and that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have continued to deliver aid. However, the humanitarian situation is still concerning and we are worried by reports on the possibility of a new cholera outbreak due to the escalating violence. The attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are worrying, as are the attacks on oil tankers passing through the Bab-El-Mandab Strait, as they have serious implications for the safety and security of commercial ships passing through that major sea lane. We look forward to the discussion on the relevant reports and updates of the Panel of Experts on Yemen on this and other issues at the level of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

Finally, we all agree on the need to find a political solution to the crisis in Yemen and, thanks to the efforts

of the Special Envoy, there appears to be a window of opportunity that we must take advantage of to restart serious talks. That is why we also believe that the Council should continue to support him to ensure that his efforts succeed. That is the only way to resolve the Yemen crisis and end the suffering of its people.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): We too join others in congratulating the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August, and in expressing our appreciation to the delegation of Sweden for its successful stewardship of the Council's work in July. I also join others in thanking Special Envoy Griffiths and the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their clear and comprehensive updates, and commend them both for their efforts to bring a political and humanitarian solution to Yemen. Kazakhstan is closely following the recent developments and would like to make the following two points.

First, on the political front, we note the importance of continuing to strive for sustainable peace, conflict prevention and resolution through political and diplomatic means, including confidence-building measures, by achieving trust that can bring parties together around the common goals of peace and development. We are closely following the recent United Nations diplomatic efforts in Sana'a and Riyadh to persuade the warring parties to return to the difficult and much-needed negotiations. Undoubtedly, the diplomatic moves led by Mr. Griffiths have helped to prevent an all-out military invasion of the city of Al-Hudaydah. They have also facilitated the warring parties' negotiation of a potential deal that could allow fighters to leave. Nevertheless, local health facilities reported in mid-July that to date around 328 people had been injured and nearly 50 killed during the fighting. Kazakhstan supports the efforts of interested countries and parties to reach a political path through negotiations for a full and fair settlement, including at the upcoming political consultations in Geneva in September. That is the only kind of approach that can preserve the sovereignty, independence and unity of Yemen and realize the interests and aspirations of its people.

Secondly, with regard to the humanitarian dimension, we voice our support for the repeated calls of the United Nations for all parties to safeguard civilian lives, prevent deaths and injuries, allow freedom of movement and protect hospitals, clinics and schools,

in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. We therefore note and welcome the coordinated efforts of stakeholders — United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Gulf countries — to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Al-Hudaydah. Kazakhstan salutes the selfless work of the humanitarian partners who have been providing food, water, emergency kits, cash and health care. Unfortunately, 22 million people — that is, 75 per cent of the Yemeni population — still require protection from malnutrition, cholera and other diseases that have killed or afflicted thousands of civilians. Like others, we share the concerns of the Government authorities and the United Nations system that the hot summer months could rapidly escalate the spread of cholera, which infected more than 1 million people last year. Against that backdrop, we express the hope that critical health infrastructure, particularly reproductive health centres, sanitation facilities and stations that supply water to the population, will not be targeted. We therefore believe it would be very helpful to create a de-escalation zone, where appropriate, so as to reduce military tensions. That in turn would mitigate the humanitarian crisis.

Finally, Kazakhstan fully supports the tireless efforts of Mr. Griffiths and other interested parties to reach an inclusive political solution in order to put an end to the conflict in Yemen.

The President: I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

First of all, I thank Mr. Ging for his briefing. He has heard the words of appreciation today from Council members to him and his team for all that they do, and I would like to add the United Kingdom's voice to those. We will continue to disburse more than \$200 million to the people of Yemen to support his efforts. I would also like to thank the Special Envoy for his tremendous efforts and for those of his team. I hope that the strong unity that he has heard from the Security Council today can be a real spur to efforts in taking the matter forward.

I think that it has been very good that we have all been able to express concern about the reports we heard today of the attack on the hospital and on the fish market. There was very strong reassurance from members of the Council that it was important to uphold international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. I think that that was absolutely unequivocal

from the Council. Obviously, the United Kingdom joins that stance.

There was also very strong condemnation of the attacks by the Houthis on the Saudi oil tanker and the other attacks in the Red Sea and concern about the arms shipments that are coming through the Red Sea. I believe that we all look forward to the forthcoming report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen. There has been a call from the Council to the Houthis to come and work with the Special Envoy and to implement the Security Council resolutions, even as we recognize the commitment to halting attacks in the Red Sea. I think that we all feel that it is now time to take this to the next stage.

There was unconditional support for the efforts of the Special Envoy and a real hope that the 6 September talks in Geneva can start a truly viable process. The Special Envoy can count on all members of the Council to unify around his efforts and to build momentum for what he has started.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Bin Mubarak (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the work of leading the Council this month, and to express to you our sincere wishes for the usual success of the United Kingdom delegation.

I am also grateful for the opportunity to address the Security Council for the first time since His Excellency President Hadi appointed me Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for his genuine efforts since he assumed the role of Special Envoy in order to achieve lasting peace in Yemen.

Since the beginning of the military operation in Al-Hudaydah governorate, the Yemeni Government and the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen have supported the efforts of the Special Envoy to achieve a peaceful solution that spares Al-Hudaydah city and all other Yemeni cities controlled by the Houthi militias military actions and to ensure that the suffering of its people is not exploited by the Houthi militias to further violate international humanitarian law and to

threaten international security and navigation. We have heeded his repeated calls and those of the international community for de-escalation on the western coast.

While the Special Envoy undertakes such efforts to relaunch the peace operation in Yemen, the Houthis continue their military build-up and to dig tunnels. They are biding their time to launch counter-attacks against our Yemeni people and to threaten the international maritime waterways.

The political leadership and the Yemeni Government will engaged positively with the plan proposed by the Special Envoy so long as the plan takes into account the three terms of reference — the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015) — as the bases for consultations and peace negotiations in Yemen. To that end, my Government has provided its observations in writing to the Special Envoy.

The choice of the Yemeni Government has always been comprehensive and lasting peace based on restoring the State institutions, putting an end to the coup and re-establishing security and stability. That will not be achieved with merely verbal support for the efforts of the Special Envoy, but by bringing more political pressure to bear on the Houthi militias and through unequivocal messages from the Security Council that the international community will not accept the continuing Yemeni suffering, the seizing of State institutions and threats to international maritime navigation.

It is time to implement the resolutions of the international legitimacy. Otherwise, the solution will be contingent on the situation on the ground as long as those militias continue to control vital regions of Yemen under unfounded pretexts. That will prolong the conflict and the suffering of civilians throughout Yemen. There is daily bombardment by the militias of residential areas in Taiz, Lahij, Al-Jawf, Mar'ib and Al-Bayda, in addition to daily sniper attacks on civilians, mostly women and children, in the city of Taiz. Those acts should be condemned and the perpetrators held accountable. The militias should not be allowed to continue such acts, which are a form of genocide, let alone turn San'a into a massive jail where the so-called supervisors are free to loot and imprison or kill anyone

who opposes them, especially after the recent uprising in December.

The militias' ongoing control of strategic areas in Yemen, where they launch attacks on international waterways, requires a decisive stand on the part of the Security Council. The most recent attack against the two Saudi oil tankers belonging to the National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia and the laying of hundreds of naval mines to harm ships and Yemeni fishermen and damage the marine environment are further examples of the Iran-backed Houthi practices to undermine the interests of Yemen, the region and the whole world by imposing a sectarian agenda sponsored and supported by Iran.

The Panel of Experts on Yemen, whose mandate was extended in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2402 (2018), has confirmed beyond doubt that the Houthis were responsible for the attack against the Saudi and Turkish ships on 3 April and 10 May. Those practices constitute a breach of international humanitarian law, contribute to the deteriorating security in the region and have a negative impact on commercial shipments and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Everybody is aware that the attacks by these militias continue unabated against densely populated civilian areas of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, using Iranian missiles in flagrant violation of all international laws and norms and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015). With regard to today's explosion near Al-Thawra hospital in Al-Hudaydah, the Arab coalition has just announced that it did not undertake any military operations in that area and has no targets there and that due investigations will take place.

The Yemeni Government, which is internationally recognized as the elected Government, underscores that all efforts of the United Nations through its Special Envoy should respect the constitutional State authorities and their legitimacy as entitled to oversee Government institutions and all the Yemeni governorates without exception in accordance with the law. The contrary would contravene the general terms of reference and international standards and enable the militias and the de facto authorities to pursue their agenda against the Yemeni people.

The international Organization has overseen the peace negotiations under the umbrella of the Security

Council in accordance with the resolutions of the international legitimacy. For the past three years and at every stage of the peace negotiations, those militias, with the world watching, have sought to undermine peace efforts by creating crises and resorting to delaying tactics. The Yemeni Government has warned against that repeatedly, and the Council knows that we were very close to making progress towards peace at the negotiations held in Kuwait, but due to the militias' intransigence, they refused to sign at the last minute.

Therefore, based on our previous experience and because we are keen to end the suffering of our Yemeni people, and believing that the best and least costly solution is a political one, we stress that any negotiations that are not based on putting an end to the coup and on the implementation of international resolutions, thereby enabling the legitimate authorities to discharge their duties towards all the people in all areas and leading to the resumption of the political process, which has been stalled by the coup, would be but hollow words that complicate the situation and fail to achieve the genuine objectives of the peace talks.

We also underscore the primacy of the confidence-building measures that were agreed upon during the consultations held in Switzerland, with a focus on humanitarian aspects, including the release of detainees and prisoners, and on ensuring that the militias do not hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These militias not only seize humanitarian relief supplies but also impede their delivery and use them for military purposes. In addition, they should cease laying mines, a crime that demonstrates Houthi-Iranian recklessness and undermines the future of our people, whom they send to the front to meet their deaths on the basis of misleading slogans and information.

The upcoming consultations cannot succeed if they do not focus on alleviating the human suffering, dealing with security aspects and then achieving the desired political objectives, consecutively.

The human suffering continues in Yemen and the situation is deteriorating daily. This unprecedented humanitarian disaster of the twenty-first century is the result of a war fuelled by a foreign agenda that uses the militias to achieve its goals in the region. All relevant United Nations reports have confirmed without a doubt that those who are pillaging the wealth and resources of our people, impeding the delivery of humanitarian assistance and preventing United Nations staff from

carrying out their duties freely are the same ones who are fighting and perpetrating horrendous acts to retain control of the major gateway to these resources.

My Government therefore calls on the international organizations operating in Yemen to expand their activities in order to cover all parts of the country. There are five relief centres in Yemen, each of which has land, sea and air ports that they can use to channel assistance. The decentralization of humanitarian efforts will ensure the effective use of funds and their equitable access to all beneficiaries and people affected throughout Yemen.

Looking at the international efforts made to alleviate this humanitarian disaster, we cannot but commend the genuine efforts of Mr. Mark Lowcock and his team as well as those of all international and regional organizations operating in Yemen. We also commend those donor countries that have met their commitments under the humanitarian response plan, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the sisterly State of Kuwait. We also call on other donor countries to meet their commitments.

The Government of Yemen will continue to make all possible efforts and compromises in order to achieve lasting peace. This war was imposed on us by the militias, which staged a coup against the State and its institutions. This situation is not acceptable to the Yemeni people, even if they have to face it alone. The militias will be held accountable for any consequences related to the non-implementation of international resolutions.

In closing, I should like to say that I was asked recently by a Western official why we are not seeing a migration exodus by Yemenis, as is the case with other countries that are experiencing similar conflicts. I told him that the Yemeni people are not only attached to their land and soil, but they also have hope. They believe in an inclusive national agenda, which they hope will be implemented soon. Children in my country continue to dream of a bright future that will bring a smile back to their faces, and mothers continue to pray every day for peace, security and stability to prevail throughout Yemen. Please do not let them down.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths to respond to the comments made and questions raised.

Mr. Griffiths: I am very grateful to all the members of the Council and to the representative of

the Government of Yemen for their remarks. What I take from this discussion is, as you indeed summed up yourself, Madam President, when you were speaking for the United Kingdom, that there is unanimous support for the notion of the resumption of political consultations to resolve this conflict. I take from that also a confirmation that that should be the primary focus.

Efforts to resolve the crisis in Al-Hudaydah are of crucial importance, particularly to our colleagues in the humanitarian agencies. They are important to my Office in the sense that they can contribute to a sense of political confidence or, if going in the other direction, can undermine the creation of political confidence. But the objective for me, and I think for all the members of the Council, for which I am most grateful, is the resumption of political negotiations. They will be inclusive, and that also, I think, has found support, and they will look to a sustainable solution, based on the

references and Security Council resolutions. I do not need to repeat to Council members how we are guided by those references and those resolutions. But they will also be guided by the gist of what has been said today, which is the need for urgent attention to an early political solution.

We are all reminded constantly — as John did so eloquently today — that delays in reaching a political solution cost lives. The math is as simple as that. That is the reason why we move quickly. I am grateful for the remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the United States, who rightly said that it is about time we started. I feel exactly that impetus, and I am very grateful for the discussion today.

The President: I thank Mr. Griffiths for his responses to the comments made and questions raised.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.



Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8324th meeting

Wednesday, 8 August 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/677)

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/683)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2018/677)

Nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2018/683)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq; Mr. Philip Spoerri, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation to the United Nations; and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, Women Empowerment Organization in Iraq.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/677, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2367 (2017), as well as to document S/2018/683, which contains the nineteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: Following the parliamentary elections held on 12 May, complaints and allegations of electoral fraud and mismanagement resulted in the decision to conduct a partial manual ballot recount. The situation has been further complicated by public demonstrations, which started on 8 July in Basra governorate and spread to other predominantly Shi'a southern governorates and Baghdad. The protesters are mainly young people with complaints over the lack of delivery of basic services, shortages of electricity, lack of jobs and pervasive corruption. However, their messages have swiftly become increasingly politicized, criticizing national leaders and successive Governments for ignoring the

needs of the people and social justice, expressing their deep and growing frustration with old political leaders and the political system, based on sectarian quotas they deem corrupt, dysfunctional and stagnant, and deploring foreign interference in the internal matters of Iraq. It is to be noted that many of their demands echo demands made in the demonstrations that engulfed predominantly Sunni governorates several years ago.

The leader of the Fatah Alliance, Hadi Al-Ameri, publicly acknowledged that politicians had failed the people, reconfirming the need to reform the political process and to establish a Government of services and not of privileges for political parties. The head of the Sa'ioun Alliance, cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who himself led massive public protests in Baghdad as recently as 2016, with similar demands as today's demonstrations, urged the suspension of Government-formation talks until the legitimate demands of protesters were met. The historically low voter turnout witnessed during the 12 May parliamentary elections, when approximately 60 per cent of eligible voters did not participate, had already delivered a strong message of dissatisfaction with the current state of management of public affairs.

In his Friday sermon on 27 July, the Supreme Religious Authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, called for the early formation of a future Government comprising competent, honest members and a Prime Minister who should be decisive and courageous enough to fight the financial and administrative corruption that is the root cause of most of Iraq's problems. The new Prime Minister should have authority and take responsibility for his Cabinet. The new Council of Representatives should abolish privileges and amend laws that do not achieve justice and equality for the people. Al-Sistani warned that if the new Government failed to abide by its commitments and deliver on its reform programme or if the new Council of Representatives or the Judiciary did not act appropriately, the people, supported by all forces of good in the country, would have no other option but to develop other ways to impose their will on officials.

On 30 July, Prime Minister Al Abadi met in Baghdad with Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani. They also underlined the need to expedite formation of the new Government and to resolve all issues between Erbil and Baghdad based on the Iraqi Constitution.

I note with appreciation that Prime Minister Al Abadi has made major efforts to provide swift and

tailored responses to legitimate popular demands, bringing temporary relief to people living under arduous conditions. However, these measures remain insufficient to address the depth of people's needs and concerns.

I urge political leaders to listen to the voice of the people and accelerate the process of formation of a patriotic, inclusive and non-sectarian Government, with a strong and empowered Prime Minister, which will give priority to political, economic and social reforms, investments, creation of jobs, reconciliation, justice, equality, accountability and good governance, including the fight against corruption; which will put all armed formations under strict control of the State and resolutely act against insubordinate militias and criminal gangs; and which will ensure the full sovereignty and real independence of Iraq, free from foreign interference.

Based on the election law amended on 6 June, the board of judges that was assigned to supervise the electoral process adopted modalities for the recounting of ballots that were subject to complaints or allegations of fraud, in line with the Federal Supreme Court ruling of 21 June. On 6 August, the board of judges announced that the manual recount had been completed. The process then moved on to results-tabulation to generate the provisional election results. Throughout the recounting process, an electoral monitoring team from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), complemented by experts of the United Nations Development Programme, provided oversight, advice and assistance. I welcome the orderly, transparent, credible and well-organized conduct of the recount. I commend the board of judges for its hands-on impartial work. I applaud the dedication and professionalism of all recounting staff, both Independent High Electoral Commission and judiciary personnel. The recounting increased public confidence in the electoral process and election results.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, Alice Walpole, and I met with numerous political leaders, women, minority and civil society actors to promote the meaningful participation of women in political, economic and social life, including their representation at the highest levels in political and decision-making structures, including in the future Government and Council of Representatives. On 31 July, UNAMI met with members of the national team

to discuss progress and challenges in implementing the Iraqi National action plan on resolution 1325 (2000), including the lack of a dedicated budget to support activities under the plan. I am very pleased to note that Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, who is seated next to me, participated actively in that meeting.

Last week UNAMI facilitated a meeting with women leaders, civil society activists and elected women, which adopted a consolidated vision of women's demands for the inclusion of gender perspectives and gender equality considerations in the Government's programme. The recommendations are attached to my briefing notes. This week Deputy Special Representative Walpole chaired a United Nations meeting with Iraqi women expected to sit on the next Council of Representatives. Iraqi women politicians undertook to work across the party divide — for example, to establish a women's parliamentary caucus, for the first time, and women's platforms to develop Government policies and strategies to increase women's participation and representation in politics, and foster gender mainstreaming in all parliamentary processes.

On 19 July, Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs and Development Coordinator, Ms. Marta Ruedas, convened a meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum in Baghdad, where more than 20 international partners were presented with 61 United Nations country team projects that are ready for funding through the \$1 billion Recovery and Resilience Programme. I urge Member States to support Iraq by accelerating delivery on the commitments made in Kuwait in February.

One year after the liberation of Mosul, United Nations Mine Action Service clearance teams have removed 43,700 explosive hazards in the city, including 1,000 improvised explosive devices. The United Nations Development Programme's Funding Facility for Stabilization has continued to support 2,361 projects, with the successful completion of more than 1,000 in five governorates. Since January, more than 684,000 displaced people have returned, while, as of 15 July, just under 2 million Iraqis remain displaced.

The security and protection environment remains volatile, posing serious protection risks to Iraqi civilians. Abductions, disappearances, detention, increased risks of sexual and gender-based violence and violations of child rights continue. For many, a combination of such factors has led to secondary or repeated displacement.

As of 24 July, donors had contributed \$324 million to the humanitarian response plan, which is 57 per cent of the plan's requirements. In order to ensure that critical assistance to vulnerable communities is available, I appeal to the donor community to continue its generous funding.

The ongoing demonstrations in southern governorates have brought to the fore their long-neglected social, economic and development needs. The United Nations country team in Iraq is developing a strategy and programmes to scale up assistance. Furthermore, it is expected that water scarcity in the five southern governorates will increase in the coming months, putting about 25 per cent of a population of 2 million at risk of water shortages, water borne-related diseases and possible displacement. Since the peoples of Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran all share water resources, I urge them to enhance their cooperation in the efficient management of water resources.

Although tangible results in the search for Kuwaiti missing persons have yet to be achieved, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence continues to carry out excavation and exploration missions as well as efforts to identify new witnesses. On 25 July another session of the tripartite mechanism took place in Kuwait. Repeated calls to the international community have prompted Member States in possession of satellite imagery from 1990-1991 to come forward with information that could assist in identifying burial locations. Nevertheless, the procurement of field equipment, the provision of forensic DNA, anthropological training courses and capacity-building for Iraqi and Kuwaiti technical teams remain a major challenge and require further assistance from the international community. I am also pleased to report that the two sides are close to setting a date for the official transfer of a considerable consignment of Kuwaiti property.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Spoerri.

Mr. Spoerri: I thank you, Madam President, for giving the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the opportunity to address the Security Council today on a topic that is at the heart of the ICRC's mission and mandate and at the centre of all aspects of our daily work in armed conflicts around the world. My briefing will focus exclusively on the topic of missing persons

from the 1991 Gulf War and the work of the so-called tripartite mechanism, which is chaired by the ICRC.

Under international humanitarian law, parties to the conflict must both prevent people from going missing and clarify the fate of those who do. In armed conflicts people go missing for a variety of reasons, and their families are left waiting. The plight of missing persons and the agony of their families often continue long after conflicts end. The tripartite mechanism was born as a result of the international armed conflict of the Gulf War, which began with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops on 2 August 1990. Shortly after the conflict, Iraq, Kuwait and members of the coalition — Saudi Arabia, France, the United Kingdom and the United States — met in Riyadh, under the auspices of the ICRC, and signed an agreement establishing the Tripartite Commission on missing persons in April 1991.

The Tripartite Commission, which is composed of members of the coalition, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq as an observer and the ICRC as Chair of the Commission, set up the Technical Subcommittee, in December 1994, in order to expedite the search process. Tripartite Commission meetings continue to be held twice a year, while the Technical Subcommittee meetings are held five times a year. It has been 27 years since the end of the Gulf war, 27 years since the first session of the Tripartite Commission and 24 years since the setting up of the Technical Subcommittee. To date, 46 Tripartite Commission sessions and 104 Technical Sub-committee sessions have been held with one aim — to trace persons still unaccounted for as a result of the conflict and to provide answers to their families. Shortly after the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the parties to the conflict met and agreed to repatriate prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian internees captured or arrested during the Gulf War.

In accordance with its mandate and with resolution 686 (1991), the ICRC made arrangements for the general repatriation of more than 70,000 Iraqis from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. It was also arranged for the repatriation of 4,000 Kuwaiti and allied forces POWs and over 1,300 civilian internees and detained civilians of Kuwaiti nationality, or civilians of third countries, from Iraq to Kuwait.

After the successful completion of that phase, the focus shifted to determining the whereabouts and fate of military and civilian persons still missing. The aim was to resolve individual cases through an exchange

of information among the Tripartite Commission members. However, it was only in 2003 that the search for burial sites, in an attempt to locate, recover and repatriate the remains of those still missing, began in Iraq, and followed suit in Kuwait.

Since 2003, the remains of 373 persons have been recovered: 275 persons in Iraq — in Amarah, Karbala, Ramadi and Samawah — and 98 in Kuwait. Those efforts were supported by additional information that the United States and the United Kingdom made available in 2010. Excavation missions also took place in Al-Habbaniyah, Muhammad Sakran, Najaf, other sites in Ramadi and, finally, Khamisiyah, in Nasiriyah, in Iraq, but, unfortunately, no human remains were found.

A total of 1,080 cases of missing persons remain open today within the framework of the mechanism, including 371 reported missing by Kuwait and 700 cases by Iraq. In addition to that, 336 other documented cases of Iraqi missing persons, known as out-of-tripartite cases, remain unresolved. It should be noted that those cases do not constitute the entirety of missing persons cases, but those documented by the mechanism.

Despite continued search efforts, it has been 14 years since human remains belonging to a Kuwaiti missing person have been recovered, and seven years since remains of an Iraqi have been found. The tremendous efforts, and the commitment of all the members, did not yield tangible results. Hundreds of families are still desperately awaiting answers.

The tripartite mechanism experienced several challenges. The most notable being the elapse of time since the cessation of the conflict. The passage of time made finding and contacting, or re-contacting, witnesses difficult. Changes in the topology of the landscape affected the ability to recognize and locate burial sites. The mechanism suffered from the loss of archive material, as well as the lack of the centralization of information, with data dispersed among the various members. Additionally, the lack of availability of the appropriate equipment and machinery proved to be a major challenge for the mechanism.

In response to those major challenges, the ICRC undertook an extensive analysis of all available information, involved various experts and forensic specialists, took stock of the situation in detail and proposed recommendations for future work. In 2017, the ICRC finalized a draft of those findings in its report entitled "The Review Project", which outlines a set of

recommendations to move forward, streamlines the search and recovery processes and emphasizes forensic best practices.

Based on those new recommendations, field work and excavation missions will continue on 27 August 2018 in Samawah, which is considered a promising site. The important recommendations of the report, including the correct utilization of satellite imagery, are guiding the optimal implementation of those missions. Despite the fact that no positive exhumation occurred in recent years, there is a newly rejuvenated positive energy and commitment to the revitalization of the Tripartite Commission from all parties.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Technical Subcommittee and Tripartite Commission members, along with UNAMI, for taking upon themselves the task of elucidating the fate of those missing persons and for their cooperation and commitment to the tripartite mechanism and its humanitarian mission. The ICRC was and remains committed to the mechanism and shall spare no effort in the search and recovery of human remains in order to provide answers to the families of missing persons, ensuring their right to know the fate of their missing loved ones.

The President: I thank Mr. Spoerri for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Araf Maroof.

Ms. Araf Maroof: I would like to thank the United Kingdom for providing me with this opportunity to represent the Iraq Cross Sector Task Force for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as its coordinator at this very important meeting. We are a cross-sector body that developed the first national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) between 2012-2014, and that has been responsible for its implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. I would also like to thank the Netherlands and Euromed Feminist Initiative for supporting my presence here.

Today, I would like to draw the attention of members of the Security Council to how several crises experienced in Iraq have impacted women, how we have addressed the situation by mobilizing State and non-State actors in the national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) process and, finally, emphasize how much remains to be done and highlight the need for international support and coordination.

From internally displaced people to returnees and Syrian refugees, figures indicate that up to 8.2 million Iraqis require immediate protection and assistance — most of them are women who are denied access to their basic rights and security and lack protection and access to facilities, clean water and sanitation. Ninety one per cent of the camps across Iraq still include no women in their management, which prevents their needs from being addressed adequately.

Sexual and gender-based violence continues at alarming rates. Women and girls living in areas under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham have been exposed to the most extreme forms of violence as a way to subjugate the whole community, namely, kidnapping for sexual slavery and exploitation, rape and forced marriages. Due to the strong patriarchal culture and tradition, victims are forced to bear social stigma and shame, in addition to the assault itself, and continue to be marginalized by their families and communities upon their return.

Furthermore, even if a great amount of work has been done by the women's movement, there are still discriminatory laws in place that impact women's security and the full enjoyment of their rights. Protection services are offered to women, including in refugee camps, mostly through local and international organizations. While organizations do their best with few resources, there is still a huge need for protection and psychosocial services to reach the most vulnerable, in particular women and girls.

The collapse of the social security network has further impacted the social and economic status of women, and made the face of poverty predominantly female. Female heads of households, the poor, the unemployed, widows and the internally displaced lack access to financial resources and public social benefits, such as social security, pensions and food programming.

Women's security and rights are closely linked to their participation and role in decision-making. In spite of a 25 per cent quota in the Parliament and public institutions, women remain underrepresented or absent in decision-making, including in political parties, as there is a general lack of acceptance of the importance of women's role in decision-making. That is due to the weight of tradition, the economic dependence of women on men, the unequal sharing of family responsibilities and the influence of religious extremism on society.

To address the security needs of the most vulnerable women and girls, in 2012 women's civil society organizations and representatives from 23 ministries and institutions — 15 in federal Iraq and 8 in Kurdistan — as well as legal experts and members of Parliament, formed the Iraqi Cross Sector Task Force, which developed the national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). In 2014, Iraq became the first country in the Middle East and North Africa to have adopted a national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and now it is the first country in the region to have reported on its implementation of the national action plan.

Iraq is also probably the first country where civil society has been structurally included in the whole process, enabling the voices of diverse women's civil-society organizations from across Iraq and the Kurdistan region to be heard through the Cross Sector Task Force. That broad involvement of authorities, together with civil society, in work on the women's security agenda serves as an example of collaboration and demonstrates their understanding that women cannot be left aside and considered as only victims and that women's needs should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, which is an approach that the national action plan has adopted.

What are the urgent security priorities today that we need the Security Council to work on with the Iraqi Government?

The first is social protection. We need to establish a system to widen women's access to comprehensive specialized services — services related to gender-based violence and free psychosocial and legal support services.

The second is legislation. To ensure protection and enable participation, active work is required to change and annul all laws that discriminate against women. A comprehensive law on violence against women is a priority in order to criminalize all forms of violence against women and girls and end the impunity of perpetrators.

The third is stabilization. Despite huge efforts, the stabilization of Iraq cannot be achieved without drawing attention to and linking it with the women and peace and security agenda, including by allocating a budget for stabilization and resources to that goal.

The fourth is livelihoods. Women, including those who are refugees, internally displaced persons and

residing in host communities, must have access to empowerment programmes and work opportunities, such as vocational training and literacy programmes to end illiteracy, while bearing in mind the double burden and social stigma they carry.

Fifthly, the participation of women must be supported — from high-level political decision-making to local governance — in reconciliation and peacebuilding. Opportunities must be provided for national and local women leaders to participate in peacebuilding and facilitate community cohesion.

Sixthly, last but not least, this year the Task Force is developing the second national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to address those gaps and priorities.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that Iraq has made tremendous and unique efforts on the women and peace and security agenda through the Cross Sector Task Force on its national action plan on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, in this challenging context, in order to efficiently respond to the multiple needs of women and support their equal participation in peacebuilding and society at large, the Security Council, as well as the broader international community, must ensure greater coordination, demonstrate greater commitment to women's rights, and provide financial and technical support to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We look to the Security Council to strengthen its work and coordination on the women and peace and security agenda in Iraq.

The President: I thank Ms. Maroof for her very helpful briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important meeting. I also thank the briefers, Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI); Mr. Philip Spoerri, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof.

A few days ago, we marked the twenty-eighth anniversary of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. That was indeed a very sad and painful anniversary. Since then, the Security Council has been working on addressing the effects and repercussions of

that invasion. It has adopted dozens of resolutions and many obligations have already been fulfilled. However, the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners, missing Kuwaiti citizens and third-country nationals remains one of the most important humanitarian issues. It has been addressed in a number of Security Council resolutions, notably resolutions 687 (1991), 1284 (1999) and 2107 (2013). The issue remains an open wound and the families of the missing persons are still suffering. We have learned of the fate of only 236 out of 605 missing individuals. We have not discovered the fate of any prisoner or missing person since 2004, and unfortunately we have achieved no progress in that regard.

We value and appreciate the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which heads the meetings of the tripartite mechanisms and its Technical Subcommittee. We express our gratitude and appreciation to the Iraqi Government, represented by the Ministry of Defence, which has been making great efforts in that regard. We hope that those efforts will be pursued and redoubled in order to close this humanitarian file and put an end to the suffering of the families of the missing persons. For its part, Kuwait has spared no effort to support those endeavours.

We call on UNAMI to continue implementing its mandate with regard to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners, missing persons and the return of Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, according to resolution 2107 (2013). In that context, we support the Special Representative in implementing his mandate and the task of the Mission pertaining to providing advice and assistance to the Iraqi Government and support for the political process and reconstruction efforts. We are aware of the magnitude of the challenges that Iraq is facing and that it needs international support to ensure its security and economic and political stability.

We commend the achievements of the Iraqi Government and its liberation and recovery of territories that were under the control of Da'esh. We welcome the recent holding of parliamentary elections, and hope that the ongoing consultations among the different political parties will be successful so that Iraq is able to form a Government of national accord that encompasses all sectors of Iraq's population.

Kuwait, as a neighbouring country, is committed to providing support and assistance to the new Iraq and strengthening our relations in all areas in order to overcome the disastrous consequences of the

actions of the previous regime, which destabilized the whole region.

Kuwait has done its utmost to assist Iraq in overcoming challenges and threats to its security. We provided logistical support to the international coalition against Da'esh and helped to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of Iraqi internally displaced persons. We have cooperated with Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank in hosting, in Kuwait last February, the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq and the rebuilding of areas liberated from Da'esh. We decided to provide urgent assistance, in line with the directives of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to meet the needs of the Iraqi brotherly people and to improve services in some of the southern governorates where demonstrations have taken place recently. We trust that Iraq will overcome such difficult circumstances.

We would like once again to thank Special Representative Mr. Jan Kubiš for his efforts despite the immense difficulties and challenges which he faced during his mandate.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We commend the convening of this meeting, and we thank Mr. Jan Kubiš, Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof and Mr. Philip Spoerri for their briefings.

We note with concern the protests in various Iraqi cities, some of which are violent, and the consequent climate of distrust and instability to which they give rise. We are particularly concerned about the possibility of new outbreaks of extremism and violent insurgency at a time when, following the important elections held in May, a new Government must be established in order to meet the legitimate demands of citizens and to deal with the significant challenges facing the country.

We commend the progress made towards the prompt conclusion of the electoral process following the complaints submitted and the end of the manual recounting of votes, as well as the establishment and underpinning of a Government capable of leading the country towards a sustainable peace. We underline the importance of the international community continuing to support and to assist the Iraqi reconstruction process.

In line with the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/677), we underline the importance of the full participation of women and young people in the formation and the political life of the Government,

as well as the process of rebuilding trust, in particular with the Kurdistan region.

We look forward to progress on establishing the investigative team on the atrocity crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, particularly since there continue to be attacks on and the killings of civilians by the remaining terrorist elements.

We underline that, in order to effectively deal with that threat, it is necessary to address its root causes by promoting justice, the rule of law and the inclusive and sustainable development of the country. Peace should serve to improve the quality of life of the population. In that regard, we highlight the national and regional efforts, supported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the United Nations Development Programme, to establish assistance, reconstruction and development programmes. We also highlight the development of the national poverty reduction strategy and the 2018-2022 development plan geared towards a fairer and more efficient distribution of oil resources in the various regions of the country. We also look forward to the development of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in line with the recovery and resilience programme proposed by the Secretary-General at the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq held in Kuwait.

We believe the efforts to promote the return of a large number of refugees to their places of origin in safe conditions to be important. However, we believe that it is also necessary to promote conditions to ensure their livelihood and well-being. The severe water shortage is therefore of great concern, given its impact on health, the desertification of cultivated land and security, which is particularly critical in the Basra region. It is necessary to prevent the emergence of conflicts owing to such a situation by adopting effective measures to protect the population, especially the most vulnerable. It is important to prevent their difficult situation from being exploited by violent extremists. We also hope for an early resolution of the pending issue of Kuwaiti prisoners and the disappeared.

In conclusion, I once again highlight the work of Mr. Jan Kubiš and UNAMI, in particular with regard to the new and essential roles to promote spaces for inclusive political dialogue and internal reconciliation. We believe that they are key to promoting a democratic, just and fair Iraqi society.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I would also like to thank Sweden for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month.

I welcome the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and thank his team for its hard work and tireless efforts. I would also like to thank Mr. Spoerri, Permanent Observer and Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Delegation to the United Nations; and Ms. Suzan Araf Maroof, coordinator of the national team for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also congratulate all civil society groups on their actions as part of the national team for the implementation of the resolution. That is a true expression of our determination to bring about change and to meet the challenges facing us following decades of disasters experienced by Iraqi society.

My Government welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2421 (2018), extending the mandate of UNAMI. We are grateful for the support of all Security Council members in establishing a new mandate that is unique among its kind in the past 11 years. The mandate calls for supporting Iraq so as to meet the needs of all components of the Iraqi people, including women and young people. It calls also for achieving sustainable development and addressing climate change. We are fully confident that UNAMI will work with the Iraqi Government to respond to those needs. We encourage UNAMI to coordinate closely with the other United Nations agencies in Iraq in order to ensuring continuity in the efforts undertaken, building on the progress made in the humanitarian area and rebuilding and development of local communities, the Government and the country.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Karim Khan as Special Adviser of the Secretary-General and head of the international investigative team on the war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide perpetrated in Iraq by Da'esh, the terrorist organization. We wish him every success in his tasks, which he took up in Iraq on 6 August in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), adopted to support Iraq's national efforts to

ensure accountability among the elements of terrorist Da'esh. This would be done by collecting, preserving and storing evidence in Iraq to further promote accountability throughout the world consistent with relevant national laws. We underscore our support for Mr. Khan's efforts and our commitment to providing him with all the facilities necessary to ensure his success. We also look forward to the international community's support for him and his team.

Despite the definitive military victories over the Da'esh terrorist gangs, we cannot say that they and other terrorist networks have been defeated. The propagation of takfiri and extremist ideology has been the driving force behind terrorism in Iraq and represents the greatest threat to national security in the post-victory period. We must adapt our anti-terrorist strategy to combat extremism and address the growing decentralization of such groups, which are seeking to expand their territory and increase their numbers. Further international efforts will be needed to help Iraq devise genuine and realistic strategies targeting the expansion of these groups. We must move from military confrontation to a national and global fight at the individual, society and State levels, nationally, regionally and internationally, so as to prevent these groups from extending their influence or regrouping once again.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war have consequences for the Iraqi people, preventing them from accessing basic services. Such devices maim, paralyse and even kill them, and that is why we will address all challenges that prevent us from meeting our commitments in terms of our technical and medical capacity to help victims and ensure their medical rehabilitation. We need additional financial resources to meet our urgent and growing needs, given our very difficult economic situation. We welcome the efforts of all international partners and donors, and we call on the international community to step up its efforts in this area.

My Government, having rid our territory of the Da'esh terrorist groups with the support of the United States and the other countries of the international coalition, as well as that of friendly and sisterly countries, has announced that it intends to implement a reconstruction plan in areas affected by Da'esh and those that experienced an interruption of economic development and construction throughout Iraq.

We are striving to boost economic development and have enacted policies aimed at strengthening food stability and security in order to reduce the poverty rate in the country and provide job opportunities for young people as part of future programmes aimed at achieving development and reforms. These include the 10-year plan and the five-year plan for development 2018-2022, as well as our poverty-reduction strategy. Our goal is to boost the private sector through the adoption of a policy aimed at strengthening the industry sector, in order to create jobs and encourage the export of locally made products in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are following up on the conclusions of the Kuwait International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq. Reconstruction is no less important than fighting terrorism. Iraq looks forward to enjoying the support of friendly countries in order to finance the recovery programme launched by the Secretary-General at the Kuwait conference, aimed at addressing crises and the causes for the resurgence of terrorist organizations.

My Government is keen to implement the principle of peaceful alternation of political power. We were determined to hold parliamentary elections as scheduled on 12 May. The Iraqi people have learned many lessons from the elections. They hope to form a fully representative Government that focuses on promoting justice and strengthens democracy and good governance, free of nepotism or corruption. Following the official validation of the results by the Federal Supreme Court, the winning political blocs will strive quickly to form a new national Government that will implement reforms in order to use the abundant resources of the country to benefit our people.

My Government supports freedom of expression and popular demands made through peaceful and legal demonstrations without fear. The Government has issued clear instructions to the security forces on the protection of civilian demonstrators, so that legitimate demonstrations are not exploited for political purposes and create discord in Iraq. The Prime Minister, Haider Al Abadi, has established a crisis unit on security and services aimed at implementing the development measures adopted by the Government in response to the demands of those who demonstrated on 14 July. These include the allocation of financial resources and job creation in the provinces of Iraq.

The people of Iraq need sustainable stability. This can be done only through the efforts of all actors to find solutions to the problems and challenges facing the country. Some Iraqi women and children continue to suffer the impact of the negative effects of terrorism, especially those who live in regions that were previously under the control of Da'esh terrorist gangs. Their suffering persists as a result of the security challenges. My Government is working hard to reintegrate persecuted women and children into society and to repatriate children who fought with Da'esh to their countries so that they are not subjected to extremism and trafficking.

My country hopes that the United Nations will support it in implementing the joint communiqué signed between the two parties in 2016, aimed at preventing and addressing conflict-related sexual violence. This would provide a platform for collective work among religious and tribal leaders and civil society.

I would also like to mention that work is being done between the Iraqi side, represented by the High Commission to investigate reports of violations of children's rights in armed conflict, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UNAMI and UNICEF in order to establish a joint action plan to address any violations regarding child recruitment.

The Government of Iraq has gone a long way in preparing its national report on the implementation of the national plan pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000). We are about to start working on the second national plan. We hope that UNAMI will provide us with the necessary support and advice in completing the first national report and in ironing out any difficulties that may prevent the implementation of the first plan.

Iraq has been seeking to resolve all pending issues with neighbouring countries and is eager to establish balanced diplomatic relations with the international community. We hope that Iraq will be a key factor in achieving economic prosperity in the region, given its various natural resources and strategic location. Since 2003, successive Iraqi Governments have respected the principle of good-neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, while seeking to resolve disputes peacefully and establish relations of mutual respect.

My Government wants to fulfil its commitments under resolution 2107 (2013). It is trying hard to

investigate the fate of prisoners and those who disappeared and are citizens of the sisterly State of Kuwait and of other third-country nationals. We are striving to repatriate Kuwait's national archives and assets. My Government has made progress and is in the course of preparing a new set of Kuwaiti property, including television broadcasts, books, a sword and a very valuable painting.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Iraq, I would like in particular to thank Mr. Kubiš, who has led UNAMI for the past three years and helped Iraq through a challenging time. We reiterate our thanks to his team in Iraq and New York for their efforts to help my country. We also thank all the friendly countries that have pledged additional funds in order to implement projects to improve the living conditions and security of the Iraqi people. This demonstrates the interest and belief of the international community in the humanitarian efforts and in achieving stability in

Iraq, while benefiting the displaced persons and the host communities inland, in addition to supporting efforts to achieve development in the country.

The President: I again thank our three briefers very much. It was extremely useful to hear about progress on the women and peace and security agenda in Iraq. Iraq is something of a regional leader in this, but obviously there are many challenges. We thank the International Committee of the Red Cross for all the important work it is doing with respect to missing persons. I also extend a huge thank you to the Special Representative and his team in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for all their efforts in helping to stabilize Iraq still further.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8325th meeting

Thursday, 9 August 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Allen	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Mielus
	Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite President Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to President Kafando.

Mr. Kafando (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to again brief the Security Council on the situation in Burundi. I would also like to commend all the other members of the Council for their ongoing commitment to international peace.

On 7 June, following the constitutional referendum of 17 May, the Head of State of Burundi, President Pierre Nkurunziza, solemnly promulgated the new Constitution adopted by more than 73 per cent of the Burundian people. On the same occasion, he officially announced the end of his mandate in 2020 and his commitment to giving his full support to the new President to be elected. In our efforts to help this brotherly country to definitively settle the crisis, those are two major acts whose importance we should underline and which provide us with an opportunity to move forward in resolving the Burundian situation once and for all.

In particular, we believe that the Government and the Burundian political class should jointly take the opportunity of that new dynamic to work to create a new political environment conducive to strengthening national unity and peace. The political leaders' dialogue workshop, held on 3 August in Kayanza, in the Republic of Burundi, at the initiative of the Minister of the Interior, which resulted in the adoption of a road map for the 2020 elections, is part of that

rationale and deserves our encouragement. Moreover, the Government should take that initiative into account in the context of the intra-Burundian dialogue to ensure the greatest possible participation by all stakeholders.

Since my previous briefing, on 24 May (see S/PV.8268), I visited the subregion as part of my mandate, in particular to meet the facilitator, President Benjamin Mkapa, in Dar es Salaam and the mediator, President Yoweri Museveni, in Kampala. I handed the mediator a written message from the Secretary-General and a memorandum containing specific proposals on both the dialogue process and the initiatives that certain guarantors of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement should undertake in order to reaffirm the paramount importance of that historic Agreement, which, as we know, represents the foundation for peace in that part of the African continent.

At the end of the discussions, the mediator and the facilitator reaffirmed to me their full commitment to relaunching the dialogue as soon as possible. In particular, the mediator committed to organizing an extraordinary summit of the East African Community on the subject. With regard to the same concerns, I am hoping to visit Burundi in October so as to undertake a certain number of activities and, of course, to commence talks with the Burundian authorities to see how we can pursue the process, alongside the facilitator and the mediator.

During recent briefings on this issue, the Council has been informed of the steady improvement of the security situation in Burundi. The situation has remained calm since the constitutional referendum, notwithstanding several challenges on the part of the opposition. There is therefore reason to commend the efforts of the Government and encourage it to remain vigilant.

Similarly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we must commend the efforts of Burundi and Tanzania, which, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, since September 2017 have allowed the voluntary repatriation of approximately 35,000 Burundi refugees. Those efforts must continue to be pursued in accordance with the principle of voluntary repatriation, while ensuring the return and reintegration of returnees in host communities with respect and dignity.

In terms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, a number of high-level delegations from countries

and international organizations have visited Burundi recently. I note, among others, the delegations of the African Parliamentary Union, the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association, the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the International Organization of la Francophonie. Today, as we speak, Bujumbura is welcoming the Women's Forum for Peace and Security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Subregion, organized under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

I truly believe that such visits undoubtedly reflect the will of the Government of Burundi to improve its relations with the international community. On that basis, and taking advantage of the de-escalation, it is to be enthusiastically hoped that Burundi and the European Union will soon resume talks with a view to resuming their cooperation. We are encouraging them — I was even going to say that we are pushing them — to that end, as we believe that sanctions are not always the ideal solution. I also call on the Burundian authorities to finalize discussions on the memorandum of understanding with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi and finally agree to sign the headquarters agreement to allow my office in Bujumbura to operate properly and in better conditions.

My final request is that the Council reiterate its appeal to all actors in the Burundian crisis to participate sincerely and in good faith in the upcoming dialogue, which will be the fifth and probably the last of its kind, with the mediator, the facilitator and the African Union, which we are undertaking to convene in the very near future either in Entebbe or Arusha. Needless to say, the road map is already in place, the programme has been laid out and the Council would do well to launch an appeal so that this time we can make the long-sought dialogue a success.

The President: I thank Mr. Kafando for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank President Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for his briefing. I thank him especially for his work on this important dossier while the situation remains volatile in a country that has been deeply and negatively affected by the electoral

tensions of 2015, which created an environment of distrust among political actors that unfortunately continues to this day.

The persistent political stalemate and the human rights situation in Burundi remain a source of deep concern for France. Faced with the lack of real, inclusive dialogue and the closing of political space, the most radical opposition factions are tempted by armed struggle. The heavy presence and role of members of the Imbonerakure militia in carrying out measures of intimidation and suppressing opposing views are increasing. As Ambassador Delattre underscored in May (see S/PV.8268), the risk of the situation deteriorating cannot be ruled out, as was shown by the killing of three soldiers — victims of an ambush — near Bujumbura this past weekend. As we know, the status quo is unsustainable. The situation is a source of instability for the entire region. Reports of clashes on Congolese territory fuelled by Burundian armed groups are illustrative of the latter.

On behalf of France, I would like to take advantage of the presence of the Permanent Representative of Burundi today to appeal to the Burundian authorities in the same spirit as President Kafando just now. It is essential to complete the pacification of the country and ensure the security of all against every form of violence, regardless of its source. It is urgent to combat impunity, including within the ranks of the security forces. It is necessary to engage unconditionally in an inclusive dialogue with all sectors of Burundian society, especially with those who do not share the same political convictions. Lastly, it is crucial, in the national interest, to restore respect for fundamental freedoms, including freedom of opinion and of the media. The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, which is the cornerstone of peace, as Mr. Kafando just pointed out, provides the appropriate framework for that reconciliation. It must be preserved at all costs.

President Nkurunziza's announcement that he will not run in the 2020 elections is a positive development that France welcomes. We hope that it will facilitate the search for a lasting political solution to the crisis experienced by Burundi. In that context, I hope that an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue can be undertaken, in the spirit of unification and peaceful coexistence established by the Arusha Agreement, with the support of the mediation of the countries of the East African Community so as to create the conditions necessary for free, fair and transparent elections in 2020. In order to

succeed, such dialogue will require the efforts of all parties and their unflagging determination to close the gap separating divergent views. The facilitator, Mr. Mkapa, is working courageously to that end with France's full support. Through dialogue, all Burundians will be able to unite and forge their common future in full independence and respect for human rights and the dignity of all.

I should like to tell the Permanent Representative of Burundi that France, the European Union, his country's other partners and neighbours in East Africa, and the entire international community stand together with him and his country to help them. France calls on the Burundian authorities to grasp this extended hand and renew peaceful relations with their international partners, as the Council has encouraged them to do in its most recent presidential statement (S/PRST/2018/7) on the subject.

The signing of the headquarters agreement with the Office of the Special Envoy and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) would send a strong message, as would the resumption of collaboration with the OHCHR team of experts, pursuant to the Human Rights Council resolution of which Burundi itself voted in favour.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we welcome the presence of President Michel Kafando and thank him for the comprehensive and enlightening briefing that he has just delivered, which was an eloquent presentation of the positive developments that have been observed in Burundi.

Following the holding of the constitutional referendum on 17 May, the current situation in Burundi is generally stable, with broad participation and almost three-quarters of the population voting in favour as solid proof of the maturity and capacity of the Government and people of Burundi to resolutely address issues of concern to the country. President Pierre Nkurunziza's statement in June that he will not present his candidature for the 2020 presidential elections, when he could run, illustrates his goodwill and demonstrates his commitment to his country. We understand that the Burundian Government is actively working to preserve national peace and stability and to promote economic and social development.

In that regard, the international community should consider the situation in Burundi in a comprehensive

and objective manner, respect the independence of the country in the management of its affairs and provide constructive assistance with a view to preserving peace and development in the region, given the importance of that brotherly country to the entire region. Burundi's stability and development have a major impact throughout the Great Lakes region. Burundi, let us remember, is a troop-contributor to both United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, which is another sign that it is a peace-loving country.

Equatorial Guinea, as always, understands that a situation such as that in Burundi is an internal affair and must be resolved internally through a frank and inclusive political process of negotiations among Burundians. Political dialogue is the only way out of the situation in Burundi, but we warmly welcome initiatives such as the inter-Burundian dialogue under the auspices of the East African Community, the conclusions of which should undoubtedly help to restore the situation.

We believe that it is important for dialogue to resume among the Government, opposition parties and civil society on Burundian soil. That would consolidate confidence-building measures and strengthen the inter-Burundian dialogue, with the necessary presence of the facilitator, former President of Tanzania Mkapa; the official mediator, President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni; the East African Community; the African Union; and other actors that can offer positive contributions.

Equatorial Guinea has always believed in and supported the mediation work of all international, regional and subregional organizations, which in this situation are truly important to making progress in the process. We encourage the Burundian authorities to continue to work together towards achieving the goal of normalizing the situation in the country and thereby improve its relations with the international community.

In conclusion, any negotiation process must lead to fair elections in 2020, which must undoubtedly help to bring about a definitive normalization of the situation in the country.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, President Michel Kafando, for his valuable briefing at the beginning of this meeting.

We have followed with interest the political developments in the Republic of Burundi in recent

months, the most important of which is perhaps the constitutional referendum held on 17 May, with the participation of most political parties. We also welcome the current calm in Burundi at this time and we look forward to 2020, when the presidential elections will be held. It is our hope that they will be free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections. We also hope that they will be credible, include all constituents of the people of Burundi and enjoy the participation of all parties. In addition, we hope that they will be held in full respect for the freedom of expression, the freedom of the press and the participation of actors from the civil society.

We commend the efforts undertaken by the African Union and the East African Community (EAC) to reach a peaceful solution in Burundi through a comprehensive dialogue based on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, signed on 28 August 2000, and the country's Constitution. We also highly appreciate the efforts of President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa as mediators in the process of political dialogue led by the EAC. There is no doubt that the involvement of the Burundian Government with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, the African Union, the European Union and the EAC is very important for providing the desired stability, which is one of the factors leading to a sustainable solution before the presidential elections. We are convinced that the convening of an extraordinary summit of the neighbouring States would make it possible to hold the fifth round of inter-Burundian dialogue, which will in turn facilitate the political process.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, we hope that the humanitarian conditions and the human rights situation will improve in the Republic of Burundi, as they are a source of great concern for the international community. Almost 180,000 people are internally displaced and 3.6 million need humanitarian assistance, while nearly 400,000 Burundians are refugees in neighbouring countries. In that regard, I commend the process of voluntary repatriation of more than 35,000 people following the signing of the tripartite agreement among the Government of Burundi, the Government of Tanzania and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr. Kafando addressed that issue during his briefing. We underscore the need to further support the undertaking of joint efforts, the reintegration of refugees into society, the provision of the necessary

environment and the return of the remaining Burundians to their homes.

In conclusion, we call for accountability for those responsible for violating human rights. They must be brought to justice so that the Burundian people can enjoy security and stability in an improved humanitarian situation. It is important to ensure respect for the rule of law in Burundi in line with human rights and international humanitarian law.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, President Kafando, for his briefing.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains concerned about the political and security situation in Burundi, which is causing unnecessary suffering to the population. I would like to bring to the following three points to the attention of the members of the Security Council: the political space for the 2020 elections, the ongoing human rights violations, and the need for continued inter-Burundian dialogue.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has taken note of President Nkurunziza's statement on 7 June of the end of his term in 2020. That is an encouraging announcement and a step towards respecting the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. We hope that this decision will contribute to opening the political and democratic space to all political actors to prepare free, transparent and inclusive elections. We therefore call on the Burundian Government to exploit that dynamic to create, in consultation with all political movements, conditions conducive to credible elections in 2020, with the full and equal participation of women. We believe that only an inclusive dialogue involving all political actors, women and men can lead to that result.

That brings me to my second point. As long as the inter-Burundian dialogue remains at an impasse, human rights violations will continue. Credible sources have reported several cases of assassination, murder, arbitrary arrest and politically motivated kidnapping during the previous month in various parts of the country. Furthermore, we are seeing a degradation in the situation of Burundian refugees in the region, with repeated infiltrations by Government agents of refugee camps in Tanzania.

The involvement of the Imbonerakure militia and the National Intelligence Service in those actions is particularly concerning. The Government of the

Netherlands condemns these violations and urges the Burundian Government to put an end to impunity and to fully respect and guarantee the rights of all Burundians.

Given the human rights situation, investigations and independent reports are more important than ever. We therefore reiterate our call on the Government of Burundi to resume its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and to fully cooperate with the Commission of Inquiry and the three independent experts mandated by the Human Rights Council. The international community remains willing to engage in a constructive discussion of these issues with the Burundian authorities.

My third point relates to the inter-Burundian dialogue. That dialogue, held under the auspices of the East African Community, remains the designated framework for addressing the ongoing political crisis in Burundi. Discussions on modalities for the return of exiled opposition members must also be finalized as soon as possible to elaborate a road map for the 2020 electoral process. That is why we call on the East African Community to hold the next dialogue session as a matter of urgency. We also call on all parties to participate therein, without any preconditions.

Once again, we underscore that the inter-Burundian dialogue must be inclusive and abide by the principles and the spirit of the Arusha Accords. The Kingdom of the Netherlands also hails the stated commitment of the African Union to contribute, along with the East African Community, to an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of the Netherlands maintains its commitment to development and stability for all Burundians. Nonetheless, the stakeholders in Burundi are the only ones who can re-establish a lasting peace, with the support of the region.

In his capacity as facilitator, Mr. Mkapa stated, on the margins of the African Leadership Forum, that security and peace in Burundi should be discussed by the East African Community leaders. We support them and call on them to continue their efforts, with the active support of the African Union and the continued attention of the Council, to break the political impasse.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation wishes to thank President Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for his excellent presentation on the sociopolitical situation in Burundi in the post-referendum period. We

applaud the personal commitment of the Special Envoy to help this brotherly nation find lasting peace.

My delegation welcomes the relative improvement of the security situation in Burundi following the holding on 17 May of the constitutional referendum. That notwithstanding, at the political level Côte d'Ivoire deplores the persistent impasse in the Burundian political process more than eight months after the last session of the inter-Burundian political dialogue, held in Uganda under the auspices of the East African Community. My country urges stakeholders to resume an inclusive political dialogue and in this regard welcomes the consultations currently under way in Arusha among the Office of the facilitator, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, and United Nations and African Union teams on the holding of a closing session for the inter-Burundian dialogue and the assistance to be provided to the various bodies responsible for organizing the 2020 elections.

Côte d'Ivoire urges the Burundian authorities to take the confidence-building measures necessary to reduce sociopolitical tensions and resume an inclusive political dialogue among the Burundian people on the basis of the Arusha Accords. In this regard, my delegation takes note of the decision taken by Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, not to stand in 2020 for another term.

At the humanitarian level, despite the positive trend observed in the context of the voluntary return of Burundian refugees, my delegation remains concerned by the situation of the thousands of refugees who are awaiting better prospects for a definitive return to their country. In this context, we welcome the efforts made by the Burundian authorities, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the donor community in providing assistance and support in the context of the programme for the voluntary return of Burundian refugees to their country.

In that regard, my delegation encourages the Burundian authorities to endeavour, with the support of the international community and especially international financial institutions and bilateral partners, to improve the economic situation in the country and to create conditions conducive to the dignified and safe return of refugees and their reintegration into the socioeconomic fabric of the country.

To conclude, Côte d'Ivoire calls on the international community to further support the initiatives of the East African Community and of the mediator and

the facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, with a view to the effective resumption of the talks in order to achieve national reconciliation and lasting stability in Burundi.

Côte d'Ivoire, my country, strongly supports the Special Envoy's call on the authorities with regard to the early signing of an agreement on and the opening of the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy in Bujumbura. Côte d'Ivoire expresses its support to the Special Envoy, Mr. Kafando, and reiterates to him its willingness to support all of his efforts in the context of the inter-Burundian political dialogue.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank Special Envoy Michel Kafando for his briefing on the current political situation in Burundi. We are very much encouraged by the continued stable security situation in that country, even after the 17 May constitutional referendum. It is also encouraging that the results of the referendum were largely accepted by stakeholders and grievances handled through established legal mechanisms.

We believe that the statement made on 7 June by His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, not to stand for the presidential elections in 2020 is a positive gesture towards the settlement of the political impasse in the country. As we have repeatedly stated, the political impasse in the country can be addressed only through peaceful, inclusive and consensual dialogue. The lack of progress in this regard in the mediation led by the East African Community (EAC) has been a matter of concern. Hence the relaunching of a genuine and inclusive dialogue under the auspices of the EAC and with the support of the African Union and the United Nations, on the basis of the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi, is all the more urgent so as to ensure lasting peace and stability in, as well as a better future for, Burundi.

In the light of the calm security situation and the subsequent progress registered in the country, we believe that the engagement between the international community and the Government of Burundi must be based on a realistic strategy aimed at supporting strong institutions and creating a conducive climate in which gains are consolidated and the remaining political differences addressed, without backsliding into the violence seen in the past.

In this regard, the Council should explore new avenues for re-engagement with Burundi. Alleviating

the socioeconomic difficulties of the population and addressing the humanitarian situation, inter alia, should be seen as an integral part of such re-engagement. On the side of the Government of Burundi, too, we believe that it is important to have an open-minded engagement with the international community in explaining the plan for the election to be held in 2020, as well as the commitment to the spirit of the Arusha Agreement.

Finally, we call for the Government to fully cooperate with the three human rights experts mandated by Human Rights Council resolution 36/2, which was presented in Geneva on 28 September 2017 by African countries, including Burundi, in gathering the information so that it could garner the necessary assistance to address the capacity gap critically needed in this area.

Mr. Vaverka (Sweden): I would like to join others in welcoming Special Envoy Kafando back to the Chamber today and to thank him for his update this morning. While welcoming the positive developments that the Special Envoy has reported on, we must not underestimate the frailty of the security situation in Burundi and the precarious nature of the political, economic and humanitarian situation, as well as continued reported grave human rights violations. There is clearly a need for the Security Council's continued engagement and support, especially for regional mediation efforts.

The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement continues to be the fundament for peace, security and stability for Burundi and the region. An inclusive political resolution of the current conflict through dialogue must be found. Sweden fully supports the efforts led by the East African Community to revitalize an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue. We expect the Government and all relevant actors to commit fully to this process. In order to stabilize the political, security and human rights situation, there needs to be a conclusion of this dialogue.

A consensus-based road map towards free, fair and inclusive elections in 2020 is important. It is crucial that the United Nations and the international community follow and support the process. I would also like to firmly underscore that ensuring women's full and equal participation is essential for credible elections. The announcement by President Nkurunziza that he will not seek another term in 2020 was an important step towards a constructive political process.

We reiterate our full support for the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Lauber. The Commission remains a unique platform for discussing the situation in the country with Burundi and brings a holistic understanding of the socioeconomic situation and the urgent peacebuilding needs.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the continued lack of progress in addressing human rights violations and abuses in Burundi. Upholding and respecting human rights and ensuring accountability is critical for trust, dialogue and human dignity and to prevent further escalation of the conflict. It is thus of great importance that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights be allowed to work in the country and enjoy our full support in this regard.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank President Kafando for his briefing today.

The United States welcomes President Nkurunziza's announcement in June that he does not intend to seek a fourth term. The act of stepping down of his own accord would be a strong step forward for Burundi and democracy, and would set a positive example for other leaders in the region. Such a step would also reaffirm the promise he made to the Burundian people in 2015. As we welcome this positive step, we also call on the Government of Burundi to improve respect for human rights, civic space, media freedom and overall governance so as to allow all Burundians to participate in their Government.

We are concerned that the Government of Burundi has still not agreed to a resumption of cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has denied access to the country by the commission of inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council. We remain deeply concerned about continuing human rights violations and abuses, including excessive restrictions on civic and political space in Burundi, media restrictions, arbitrary arrests and unduly harsh sentences for human rights defenders. We look to the Government of Burundi to take clear steps to end violence and reopen the political space for members of the opposition, independent media and civil society, and to engage in inclusive dialogue with Burundian political stakeholders.

We also urge the Government of Burundi to ensure that opposition political actors, including those currently acting as independents, are fully

able to participate in future elections. We encourage opposition political actors to commit to participating in elections in 2020 and to take concrete and realistic steps to ensure that they are able to do so. We must also insist that all parties, including the Government and opposition members, categorically reject violence as a political tool. These measures will be essential to peaceful, free, fair and open political competition ahead of the elections scheduled for 2020.

We also welcome efforts by the region to convene the next round of the inter-Burundian dialogue, led by the East African Community, in September. The sustained support of the region will be required to produce a durable political solution that lays the groundwork for peaceful, free, fair and inclusive elections in 2020. However, we reiterate that good-faith engagement from both the Burundi Government and opposition members is necessary for a successful dialogue.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, President Kafando, for his insightful briefing.

Kazakhstan reiterates the importance of implementing the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and of establishing meaningful inter-Burundian dialogue. Those, we can say, are the most important and the only viable instruments for a peaceful resolution of the political situation in Burundi. We therefore call on all parties to engage in direct and constructive cooperation with the aim of holding the next round of the dialogue.

We commend the decision of the President of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, not to run for another term, thereby helping to ease the political strain. This measure will certainly assist in sustaining peace, security and democracy in the country. We express hope that the forthcoming presidential elections in 2020 will be held in a peaceful, free, fair, transparent and inclusive manner, with the participation and broad consensus of all stakeholders. Only such an approach would ensure durable peace, and it should be supported by the international community.

We also emphasize the importance of respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens, and reaffirm the primary responsibility of the Burundi Government for providing security, thereby protecting its population. We further stress the importance of the committed efforts of the African Union and the East African Community in revitalizing the political process

in Burundi. We particularly support the activities of the facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa, and the mediator, President Museveni.

The work of the joint technical working group is also crucial in promoting confidence-building measures. We encourage the regional and subregional organizations and the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement to redouble their efforts and contribute to finding a political solution to the current situation in country. That nationally owned process should be undertaken with respect for the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of Burundi.

At the same time, while the security situation in Burundi is generally calm, a large number of internally displaced persons and thousands of refugees are in need of assistance. This issue needs to be continuously addressed by the Council, the United Nations and bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other international institutions. Such collective effort is needed for the development work that must be rigorously undertaken.

We also commend the regional host countries for their assistance and reiterate that the repatriation of refugees must be voluntary and in accordance with the principles of respect and dignity, as enshrined in international and human rights law. The close coordination between the United Nations, the African Union and subregional structures would have a significant impact on the political and humanitarian dimensions.

Finally, we commend the determined efforts of the Special Envoy and the United Nations system to achieve peace, security and long-term stability. We also acknowledge the significant role of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration as a platform for the Burundi authorities to address existing economic challenges, for which the support of international partners is critical.

Mr. Lie Cheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We listened carefully to the briefing by Mr. Kafando in his capacity as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi. We hope that the Special Envoy will continue to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the Government of Burundi.

The current situation in Burundi is generally stable. The Burundian Government has worked actively to preserve national peace and stability and

to promote economic and social development. It has formulated a national development plan and cooperated with neighbouring countries to facilitate the voluntary return of Burundian refugees. China welcomes those positive developments. Burundi is an important country in the Great Lakes region of Africa. The stability and development of Burundi contribute to peace and stability in the region. The international community should fully recognize the efforts of the Burundian Government in maintaining peace and stability and should actively provide constructive assistance to the Government and the people of Burundi to meet their needs. China would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, there must be proper respect for Burundi's national ownership, sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. The international community should consider the current situation in Burundi comprehensively and objectively and should play a constructive role with a view to ensuring the long-term stability and development of the country and the region.

Secondly, there must be continued support for Burundi's political process. China appreciates the positive efforts by regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the East African Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in exercising their good offices with regard to the issue of Burundi. We support the EAC in taking the lead in that regard.

Thirdly, our priority should be to increase humanitarian assistance to Burundi and to support its economic and social development. China welcomes the Burundian Government's recent active cooperation with neighbouring countries in their response to refugees and other humanitarian issues. China urges the relevant international agencies and organizations to resume economic cooperation with and development assistance to Burundi as soon as possible.

The Chinese Government supports the Burundi peace process and has actively provided assistance for the country's nation-building. China is ready to continue to play a constructive role in achieving stability and development in Burundi.

Mr. Mielus (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Envoy Michel Kafando for his briefing.

Noting the adoption of the new Constitution through a referendum on 17 May, as well as the concerns about

the compatibility of some of its provisions with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, Poland welcomes the announcement by President Nkurunziza that he does not intend to seek a fourth term in 2020, thereby reaffirming the promise that he made to the Burundian people in 2015.

At the same time, we are concerned over the political situation in the country and the slow progress of the intra-Burundian dialogue. Poland believes that the President's announcement will need to be followed by tangible steps to achieve political reconciliation. It is the role of the authorities to ensure that the electoral process in 2020 is free, fair, transparent and truly inclusive, with the participation of all political parties and the equal participation of women.

We recognize the Arusha Peace Agreement and its provisions with regard to the need for a broad political consensus and preventing the concentration of power in a single institution or unit as the main instrument for peace and stability in Burundi and in the whole region. The intra-Burundian dialogue needs to be continued with the active participation of all Burundian stakeholders, since only an inclusive political dialogue can ensure a sustainable and widely acceptable solution.

In that context, Poland would like to emphasize the special role of the leaders of neighbouring countries and the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement in order to overcome the causes that are generating instability in the region. We welcome the commitment of the African Union and the East African Community (EAC) to a peaceful resolution of the political situation in Burundi and affirm our support for the facilitation led by the EAC representative, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa.

Poland remains seriously concerned over the human rights situation in the country. We are worried about the reported intimidation of members of the opposition as well as the limitations on political space, an independent media and civil society. We strongly condemn all violations and abuses in that regard by whomsoever. Poland calls for the authorities to restore effective cooperation with international institutions in that regard. We urge the Government of Burundi to take transparent steps to improve governance and respect for human rights, to open up the public and democratic space and to ensure the freedom of the media ahead of the elections in 2020.

The situation in Burundi must be seen in the broader regional context of the Great Lakes region. It

threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian and refugee crisis in Burundi and in its neighbourhood.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the fact that the Arusha Agreement gives hope not only to Burundi but also to the entire region. It is now urgent to return to the spirit of that Agreement and to preserve the country as an inclusive and safe home for all its people.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the convening of this meeting and the briefing by Mr. Michel Kafando.

We take note of some positive developments since the referendum, such as the decrease in violence and the announcement by President Pierre Nkurunziza that he will not stand in the 2020 elections. However, we note with concern that there continues to be a climate of instability, confrontation and a lack of dialogue, as well as ongoing reports of human rights violations and restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of expression, association and the press. The Government's action, or rather inaction, in the area of human rights and the actions of associated groups such as the Imbonerakure are of particular concern. We therefore believe that the Security Council must remain attentive to the developments in the country with a view to promoting the peace and stability required to overcome the humanitarian crisis and to address the root causes of the conflict.

In that regard, we stress the need for the country to remain committed to implementing the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, as well as to upholding the delicate balance that it has established among the Burundian communities since the civil war. To that end, we believe that it is vital to restore and to move forward in the intra-Burundian dialogue facilitated by the East African Community. We hope that it can become the inclusive and representative mechanism necessary to overcome the political crisis and to improve the security situation in the country. We also believe that the difficult situation suffered by the almost 400,000 Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries, in particular women and children, must be urgently addressed.

On the other hand, we believe that it is essential to promote accountability for human rights violations committed in the country and to build the necessary institutional framework for that purpose. It is important that the Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights decide

on and agree the memorandum of understanding so that they can resume their activities on the ground.

Finally, we would like to highlight the important role of regional organizations and neighbouring countries in support of stability in the country. Breaking the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty is the main task of the Burundian people, but it also requires the support of the international community.

Mr. Repkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Michel Kafando for his briefing on the developing situation in the country. We regret that, unfortunately, today the Security Council could not listen to the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Mr. Jürg Lauber, Chair of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which remains a channel for reliable communication with Bujumbura. We support the PBC's efforts to revitalize cooperation with the Burundians by discussing issues related to the socioeconomic development of the country and by re-establishing donor confidence.

We continue to receive information from Russian colleagues — our diplomats in Bujumbura — according to which the situation in the country remains generally calm. The genuine security situation in Burundi is evidenced by the fact that the country continues active inter-parliamentary contacts. Opposition politicians as well as refugees are continuing to return to Burundi. The Government has released more than 2,000 political prisoners in the framework of the ongoing national reconciliation process.

In evaluating the political situation in Burundi, we would like to point to the peaceful atmosphere in which the constitutional referendum was held on 17 May. We note the impressive, virtually unprecedented voter turnout for an African country, and the support expressed for the constitutional changes by a large majority of those who voted, as well as the fact that this expression of the people's will was preceded by a democratic and transparent propaganda campaign. It is also important that the country's new Constitution, adopted on 7 June, retains all the elements of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, including those concerning ethnic quotas in Burundi's governing institutions. We want to point out that the current President of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, has declared his willingness to support his successor when his second presidential term ends in 2020.

In that regard, we are not in full agreement with the alarmist assessments of the internal political situation in Burundi voiced by a number of our colleagues today. They are clearly not taking into account the country's positive momentum, which is a very good reason for taking it off the Security Council's overloaded agenda. We get the impression that instead of trying to improve our collaborative efforts, our colleagues are openly playing up to the radical Burundian opposition. We proceed from a belief in the impermissibility of outside interference in Burundi's internal political processes, and we are opposed to mentoring and the imposition of off-the-shelf recipes on sovereign States for solving complex socioeconomic and political problems.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Michel Kafando, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for his briefing.

Bolivia is pleased that the referendum on 17 May was held in a calm atmosphere with no major incidents and in an inclusive manner, with all political parties participating. We also believe that the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement should continue to be the cornerstone of this process. We reiterate that an inclusive dialogue and respect for the Agreement constitute a firm foundation for dealing with the country's crisis. In that regard, we noted the fact that some important aims of the Agreement on national reconciliation, democratic principles, social cohesion, the distribution of power, women's participation in politics, sovereignty and the rule of law and regional integration have been incorporated into the new Constitution. We encourage Burundi to continue working to create conditions conducive to a peaceful environment and a climate of trust for the next elections, scheduled for 2020, by strengthening a spirit of tolerance, taking conciliatory measures and resuming a dialogue with the opposition.

Bolivia appreciates and supports the Special Envoy's efforts to see the inter-Burundian dialogue continue in an atmosphere of inclusion. We appreciate the facilitation efforts led by the former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa and the current President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, in accordance with the Arusha Agreement. In that regard, we believe that the road map proposed by Mr. Mkapa should be implemented in order to reach a consensus. We are also grateful for the efforts of the East African Community (EAC), the African Union Special Representative in Burundi, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of

the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country team. We encourage them to continue their good offices and to work to coordinate their efforts in order to improve their cooperation and continue to support the EAC-led mediation, which should remain at the head of the process.

Burundi's contribution to peace and security through its deployment of troops should also be taken into account, since it is a demonstration of its institutional capacity. The international community should support Burundi in building its capacities, which are closely linked to its socioeconomic development and continuing humanitarian challenges. We encourage the international community to continue providing financing for the humanitarian response programme in Burundi. We want to highlight the fact that more than 35,000 refugees have voluntarily returned and urge the Government to continue to prepare for the voluntary return of the hundreds of thousands of others who are still in neighbouring countries. In order to overcome these challenges, it is essential to establish an atmosphere of trust, which will involve lifting any unilateral sanctions, in accordance with the call by the Heads of State at the July Summit of the African Union. Such sanctions have damaging consequences for the lives of groups in vulnerable situations and a negative impact on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Lastly, the Security Council, and the international community in general, should give constructive support to the dialogue and take action in areas where there is still a lack of convergence, in the interests of a peaceful settlement based on respect for Burundi's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I would like to thank Special Envoy Kafando for his briefing. I also agree with my Russian colleague on the value of the Peacebuilding Commission and the work of Ambassador Lauber, who is unfortunately on vacation right now. It is really important that we bring all elements of the abilities and capabilities of the United Nations to bear in these situations.

The Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement brought peace to Burundi after more than a decade of civil war and hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths. It is crucial for Burundi's long-term stability that the spirit and the letter of the accords be preserved. We

welcome President Nkurunziza's announcement that he will step down at the end of his current term. It was an important step and an important message for the people of Burundi, the region and the international community. A genuine, inclusive dialogue with all parties remains the only viable option for resolving the political situation, and so, as Mr. Kafando made clear, progress on the inter-Burundian dialogue led by the East African Community remains crucial to the future peace and security of both Burundi and the region. We echo his call for the parties to engage openly and constructively, and urge the region and subregion to remain fully engaged in order to ensure that swift progress is made during the coming months and weeks.

The human rights situation in Burundi is deeply worrying. The United Kingdom urges the Government of Burundi to take steps to make rapid progress in improving the situation so that the country is better prepared to move towards elections in 2020. First, it should signal its commitment to upholding human rights by completing its negotiations on a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in order to enable OHCHR to operate effectively in Burundi. Secondly, the Government should implement Human Rights Council resolution 36/2, endorsed by the Group of African States, including Burundi, and adopted at the thirty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council in September 2017. We urge the Government to engage with OHCHR to facilitate the return of the human rights experts whose visas were revoked in April.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor under the United Kingdom presidency, I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of August. Knowing your experience and your team's proven professionalism and dynamism, we have no doubt that your presidency will be a successful one, and you can count on Burundi's cooperation throughout your tenure. I would also like convey through you my thanks to all the members of the Security Council, who since 2015 have always supported the sovereignty and political independence of Burundi and respected the

principles of the Charter of the United Nations during their consultations on Burundi.

I thank all the delegations that spoke this morning, but we regret that a small number among them remain wedded to the narrative of 2015 and fail to note positive developments in Burundi that have led to the positive situation referred to by the Special Envoy, who enjoys the support of everyone here. The tendency to diametrically oppose the position held by the Special Envoy and the majority of States Members and disregard developments of the situation on the ground, while adhering to the 2015 narrative, is not a constructive approach, and it should change.

I warmly welcome the presence of Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, this morning. I cannot thank him enough for his briefing.

The purpose of my statement this morning is to share with members of the Security Council new developments in Burundi since previous briefing on the situation in my country, on 24 May (see S/PV.8268).

As one can see, the security situation in Burundi has remained calm, stable and fully under control. The return to normalcy in the country has allowed, *inter alia*, the holding of the constitutional referendum, which took place without major incident, the large-scale return of refugees and the hosting of several conferences at the regional and continental levels, as well as the welcoming of foreign dignitaries visiting Burundi. The visit of the Chairperson of the African Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union took place just this past week. At the conclusion of his visit and after having travelled to six provinces within the country, the Chairperson issued a statement in which he declared that he had found Burundi to be a calm and stable country. He was impressed by the evident will of the Burundian political class to turn over a new leaf *vis-à-vis* 2015, in order to work towards the holding of free, transparent and peaceful elections in 2020.

With regard to the political situation, the Council will recall that, upon the promulgation of Burundi's new Constitution on 7 June, the President of the Republic informed Burundians and the international community that his second term of office would end in 2020 and that he would support the new President to be elected the same year. Contrary to the statements of some — as you will recall, Mr. President — who had attributed to him the intention to fashion the new Constitution to

his own ends so as to remain in power until 2034, the President's gesture was of great political and democratic significance and strengthened democratic processes in the region and on the African continent. His gesture should be encouraged and welcomed. I thank all the delegations that commended that action, which was extremely important not only for Burundi but also for the subregion.

Furthermore, with regard to the political sphere, it would not be an overstatement to say that the spirit of tolerance and the process clearing the way for and opening Burundian political space are becoming increasingly strengthened. That has been reflected in the return and reintegration of several thousand refugees, as well as several political leaders who had fled the country, including former President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya and former Vice-President Alice Nzomukanda, as well as several former Burundian parliamentarians. Those politicians who returned to their country are freely enjoying their civil and political rights today. The release of more than 2,000 prisoners in early 2018 is also part of that dynamic of reconciliation, social cohesion and political tolerance under way in the country.

With regard to the inter-Burundian dialogue, my delegation recalls that, as a means of finding peaceful solutions to political disputes, dialogue has become a way of life in our country. Those asking us to promote dialogue today are pushing on an open door. Besides the commendable efforts of the East African Community, Burundi enjoys a Political Party Forum, which is an excellent platform for promoting dialogue among authorized political parties in Burundi. Within that context, all political parties met in Kayanza, in the north of Burundi, on 3 August to discuss informally significant issues concerning the 2020 elections. That meeting resulted in the adoption of a road map by more than 20 political parties with a view towards free, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020.

With regard to regional dynamics, they remain on course. Contacts at the highest level have continued since the Council's latest meeting on the subject. This past week, His Excellency the President of Uganda, the chief mediator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, granted an audience to the first Vice-President of Burundi, who conveyed a special message from His Excellency President Nkurunziza to his Ugandan counterpart. Similarly, early this week, His Excellency the President of the United Republic of Tanzania also

received in audience the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burundi, who also carried a special message from the President of the Republic of Burundi to his Tanzanian counterpart — all of which is an indication that regional political dynamics are healthy despite what has been said in this Chamber.

With regard to the return of refugees, I am pleased to inform the Council that, to date, since 2016, more than 206,000 refugees have voluntarily returned to Burundi. That number includes 100,000 refugees, who decided to return in 2016; 168,000 who returned to their families from January to August 2017; and another 38,254 who have returned to the country since the tripartite agreement of August 2017 among the Governments of Burundi, Tanzania and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The voluntary return of refugees is continuing at a satisfactory pace.

My delegation nevertheless reiterates its request to UNHCR and our friends in the region to work with certain host countries holding our compatriots hostage in exile by erecting artificial barriers towards their voluntary return to Burundi and towards ensuring that the refugee camps maintain their civilian character in accordance with the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and resolution 2389 (2017), on the Great Lakes Region, adopted on 8 December 2017.

With regard to human rights, Burundi once again reiterates its readiness to work and cooperate with other nations and the United Nations to promote the protection of human rights in Burundi and elsewhere throughout the world. That noble mission will be made possible only through stepped-up cooperation and frank dialogue among Member States. In that context, Burundi continues to cooperate in implementing the resolution adopted by the Group of African States on 28 September 2017 in Geneva within the framework of cooperation and capacity-building. Burundi is awaiting official notification from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the appointment of three experts in transparency and due process. What has been said about Burundi's so-called lack of cooperation in the implementation of that resolution, which we own as our own, as we supported it, is owing to misinformation and a lack of transparency. The same can be said concerning the memorandum of understanding on the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Burundi. Burundi remains very open to pursuing discussions in a constructive spirit.

With regard to the economic sanctions that European Union partners imposed upon Burundi following the unrest caused by the 2015 elections, my delegation would like to inform the members of the Council that the context in which those sanctions were imposed has fundamentally changed. The electoral tensions of 2015 are no more. For us, they are a page in history that will serve as a lesson to irreversibly reconcile our country. I also recall that, following the undisputed return of peace and security in our country, the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government held in early July in Mauritania adopted a resolution demanding the European Union to lift the unjust and immoral sanctions weighing heavily on Burundi, which are, as members know, contrary to the principles of Charter of the United Nations and negatively affect vulnerable groups like women and children.

Concerning cooperation with the United Nations, Burundi is proud to participate actively and outstandingly in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions. More than 6,000 Burundian men and women have been deployed in various peacekeeping operations throughout the world, especially in the Central African Republic and Somalia. The excellent work of our brave soldiers on a peace mission, who have voluntarily chosen to sacrifice their lives by saving those of others, far from their native land and in particularly difficult conditions, must be appreciated and recognized at its true value.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its strong appeal to the Security Council to have the courage to remove Burundi from its agenda. It is worth noting that the current political and security situation in the country is calm, stable and completely under control. It is far from posing a threat to international peace and security, which is the Council's area of competence. No objective argument can justify the holding of untimely meetings on Burundi at this juncture.

My delegation draws particular attention to the fact that the organization of a spate of meetings on Burundi that are not motivated by the reality on the ground could become a factor of destabilization for the country, instead of promoting the peace and stability sought by all, and could monopolize regional efforts. This fury against Burundi, a country whose return to normalcy is well established, should cease; if it does not, history will remember that our country was kept on the Council's agenda unjustly in order to meet non-Burundian and non-African interests. The valuable time that Council

allocates to Burundi should be devoted to other areas of tension and conflict, which are legion at the moment, as we all know. The place that Burundi deserves today is not in this Chamber; it should be within the United Nations agencies in charge of socioeconomic development to boost its economic recovery.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
9 August 2018

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 8326th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

**Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday,
9 August 2018, at 3 p.m.**

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"On 9 August 2018, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 8326th meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

"The President invited Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in the meeting in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The Security Council and the troop- and police-contributing countries heard a briefing by Ms. Keita.

"Members of the Council, Ms. Keita and representatives of participating contributing countries had an exchange of views."





Security Council

Seventy-third year

8327th meeting

Friday, 10 August 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hickey.....	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China.....	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbongo
	Ethiopia.....	Ms. Guadey
	France.....	Mr. Melki
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait.....	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru.....	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland.....	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation.....	Mr. Repkin
	Sweden.....	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America.....	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Peace consolidation in West Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-5806 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

18-25635 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject

of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to this statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2018/16.

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8328th meeting

 Friday, 10 August 2018, 10.10 a.m.
 New York

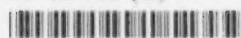
<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hickey	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Repkin
	Sweden	Mr. Vaverka
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Central African region

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18-25641 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African Region

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2018/17.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8329th meeting

Wednesday, 22 August 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Ms. Bico Mbasogo
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

18-26379 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: We meet today in the wake of yet another series of violent escalations that threatened to plunge Gaza into war. Over the past several weeks, Special Coordinator Mladenov has led unprecedented United Nations efforts with the Government of Egypt and other regional and international partners to prevent another devastating outbreak of hostilities, respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs and support intra-Palestinian reconciliation.

The recurring violence highlights the urgency of that initiative. In several rounds of hostilities throughout the reporting period, Palestinian militants fired some 195 rockets and mortars towards Israel. On 7 August, one Grad rocket reportedly landed in an open field near the city of Beersheba — the furthest that a projectile has been fired since the 2014 hostilities.

Israel targeted sites in the Gaza Strip on at least 125 occasions. Eight Palestinians, including a pregnant woman and her 18-month-old baby, were killed, while 56 Palestinians and 28 Israeli civilians were injured. Such exchanges, which have escalated in recent months, underline the fragility of the interim periods of calm and the need for longer-term solutions.

In recent weeks, the humanitarian situation in Gaza also deteriorated further due, in part, to additional restrictions that Israel imposed on the movement of goods through the Kerem Shalom crossing. That was in reaction to the launching of incendiary kites and balloons from Gaza, which have burned thousands of acres of Israeli fields, forests and agricultural land.

On 15 August, Israel fully reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing and expanded the fishing zone to

nine nautical miles. The Secretary-General welcomed the decision as having a significant impact on the struggling Gaza economy and on efforts to de-escalate the situation. However, on 19 August, Israel closed the Erez pedestrian crossing to the residents of Gaza and the West Bank, except for humanitarian cases, citing continued violent incidents at the fence.

As we work towards the full lifting of the closures on Gaza, in line with resolution 1860 (2009), I call on all parties to ensure that the urgently needed humanitarian supplies reach the Gaza Strip. Such supplies should not be held hostage to political and security developments.

I also reiterate the previous calls of the Special Coordinator to Hamas to provide full information on the Israeli nationals who are being held in Gaza, as required by international humanitarian law. The United Nations is taking steps to increase its capacity on the ground to better support energy, water, health and job-creation projects endorsed by the Palestinian Authority and the international community. I am pleased to note that many donors and international organizations are looking into increasing their allocations for Palestine. That is the appropriate response to Gaza's crumbling infrastructure and collapsing economy. In particular, I am encouraged by the World Bank's increased \$90-million allocation for the West Bank and Gaza, including for some 4,400 short-term employment opportunities. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is also accelerating its emergency economic assistance programme with support from several donors. Both efforts focus on employment for women and young people as a priority. The UNDP programme aims to have 40 per cent of the resulting job placements for women — a critical step given that the unemployment rate for Palestinian women continued to be significantly higher than for men, exceeding 78 per cent in Gaza in the second quarter of 2018.

That follows the launch in May of the Decent Work for Women programme — a joint Italian, UN-Women and International Labour Organization initiative to promote equal and decent work opportunities throughout the occupied Palestinian territory — as well as the launch last April of a UN-Women project, funded by Japan, to support women in Gaza. Improving the socioeconomic status of Palestinian women is essential to peace and stability, as women remain more vulnerable throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. Those are also important efforts to strengthen women's role in

preventing conflict, in line with the Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security.

However, I am deeply concerned that funding for United Nations emergency fuel, which sustains some 250 critical facilities in Gaza, has now run out. Approximately \$4.5 million is urgently required to ensure a minimum level of essential services up to the end of the year. Also of concern is a dangerously short supply of essential medicines, with 40 per cent of essential drugs completely depleted.

The United Nations is working with the Governments of Israel and Palestine on reviewing the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism to improve its functionality, transparency and predictability. The Palestinian Authority has also made great efforts to reassert its engagement in support of Gaza. I look forward to its full and active participation in that regard. I also welcome Egypt's continued efforts to facilitate intra-Palestinian reconciliation, critical to advancing not only Gaza's humanitarian and development objectives but also Palestinian national aspirations. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call on all parties to support those efforts.

We have been regularly updating the Security Council and its members on the unprecedented financial challenge that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) faces this year. The Secretary-General has warned that failing to address UNRWA's remaining \$217 million funding shortfall will have serious humanitarian and development consequences, as well as implications for regional stability. I thank Member States that have taken steps to assist in closing the shortfall and call on others to increase their support to UNRWA. It is imperative to maintain a strong collective mobilization.

Turning to the broader situation, violent incidents continue to take place throughout the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. In Gaza, 13 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces during continued protests near the perimeter fence, including one medical worker and four children. Some 1,000 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were also injured. On 21 August, Israel's Military Advocate General announced that military police investigations would be opened into the deaths of two Palestinians killed during protests near the fence in recent months. While Israel has a duty to protect its citizens, it must exercise maximum restraint

in the use of live fire and refrain from using lethal force, except as a last resort. I further call on Hamas to avoid violence at the fence and refrain from putting children in harm's way. Children should never be targeted or instrumentalized in any way.

On 26 July in the West Bank settlement of Adam, a 17-year-old Palestinian stabbed an Israeli civilian to death and injured two others. He was shot and killed by one of the victims. It is deplorable that Hamas and others once again chose to glorify that attack. After a period of relative calm in Jerusalem, on 27 July, the one-year anniversary of the resolution of last year's unrest at the Holy Esplanade, clashes erupted at the site between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces, during which 10 Palestinians and four Israeli police officers were injured. On 17 August, an Israeli-Arab man was shot dead by Israeli security forces in Jerusalem's Old City, after attempting to stab them. Following both incidents, Israeli security forces closed the entrances to the compound for a few hours before restoring full access. With the celebration of Eid Al-Adha this week and the Jewish holidays approaching, I urge all to do their part to avoid provocations at Jerusalem's holy sites. The Special Coordinator conducted a series of meetings with Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders in Jerusalem to discuss the importance of maintaining calm, rejecting violence and ensuring the status quo is preserved at the holy sites. He will continue his engagement with all stakeholders.

On 14 August, Israeli authorities announced they would publish a tender for 603 units in the Ramat Shlomo settlement in East Jerusalem — the first such announcement since 2016. In Area C, a tender for 511 housing units was published and construction based on previously approved plans continued. On 1 August, the Israeli Civil Administration confirmed its intention to expand the municipal boundaries of the Amichai settlement to include the outpost of Adei Ad. If implemented, it would result in the first outpost legalization under Israeli law since 2014. I reiterate the long-standing position of the United Nations that all settlement activities are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.

Israeli authorities demolished 18 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem for lack of building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain. As a result, eight Palestinians were displaced, including six children. On 1 August, Israel's High Court of Justice indicated that it had not

found sufficient reason to prevent the demolition of the Bedouin village of Khan Al-Ahmar. It instructed the State to present an alternative relocation site, on which the parties have not agreed. Demolition is on hold while the Court considers the case. I reiterate United Nations calls on Israel to cease the demolition of Palestinian property and efforts to relocate Bedouin communities in the occupied West Bank. Such actions are contrary to international law and undermine the two-State solution.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the efforts of ordinary women and men — Israeli and Palestinian — who overcome cynicism and despair by taking tangible steps to promote tolerance and forge a shared future. They include volunteers who drive Palestinian patients to medical appointments in Israel; youth leaders who are finding creative ways to build a shared future among Jerusalem's communities; scientists working together to solve regional environmental challenges and Palestinian and Israeli women mobilizing constituencies for peace and promoting the participation of women in the

political process, in line with resolution 1325 (2000). As outlined in the 2016 Middle East Quartet report (S/2016/595, annex), such initiatives provide a crucial foundation for broader peace efforts. I invite Member States to continue to generously support them. Even as the international community focuses on resolving the current crisis in Gaza and returning a legitimate Palestinian Government to the Gaza Strip, the perseverance of those individuals reminds of the need to review our efforts in the context of our broader goal to end the Israeli occupation and achieve a future with two States living side by side in peace, security and dignity, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.



Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8330th meeting

Thursday, 23 August 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hunt	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorenti Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Han to
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Njengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Guegan
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almuna'ekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wroneńska
	Russian Federation	Mr. Neben'ia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2018/770)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original language only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

18-26476 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of sympathy on the passing away of former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

The President: As Security Council members will be aware, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan passed away on 18 August. I am sure that Council members will join me in expressing our profound sadness at the news of his death, and in sending condolences to his family and loved ones. As President of the Security Council, I propose that the Council now observe a minute of silence in his honour.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2018/770)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninsy, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/770, which contains the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering that threat.

I now give the floor to Mr. Voronkov.

Mr. Voronkov: On behalf of the Secretary-General, I would like to start by expressing my condolences and solidarity with countries where terror attacks have recently taken place. I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

The report was prepared with the input of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and other United Nations entities and international organizations. As requested by resolutions 2253 (2015) and 2368 (2017), the report contains a strategic-level threat assessment, as well as an update on the United Nations contributions in support of Member States' efforts to counter the threat. The report explains how ISIL continues to present a serious challenge, especially with regard to its transformation into a covert network, the activities of its regional affiliates and the complex threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters, foreign terrorist fighters and their families. It also elaborates on how Member States and the United Nations continue to strengthen, refine and promote the effective use of tools and measures to address the evolving transnational threat posed by ISIL. Allow me to briefly touch on several key highlights of the report.

First, the report notes that, although the so-called ISIL caliphate has suffered significant losses, it remains a serious and significant concern. Since the end of 2017, ISIL has been defeated in Iraq and is in headlong retreat in the Syrian Arab Republic. Overall, current ISIL membership in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic is estimated at more than 20,000, divided fairly evenly between the two countries. Some ISIL fighters are fully engaged militarily, and others are concealed in sympathetic communities and urban areas. ISIL has also decentralized its leadership structure to mitigate further losses. Therefore, an ISIL core is likely to survive in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic in the

medium term owing to the ongoing conflict and complex stabilization challenges. In addition, significant ISIL-affiliated members also exist in Afghanistan, South-East Asia, West Africa and Libya, and to a lesser extent in Sinai, Yemen, Somalia and the Sahel.

Secondly, the challenge posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters remains complex. The flow of foreign terrorist fighters towards ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has essentially ended. However, the reverse flow — although slower than anticipated — remains a serious challenge. Moreover, the rising threat from ISIL's global network, particularly from foreign terrorist fighters, will be multidimensional and difficult to predict. For example, the report notes that expertise garnered in conflict areas is one of the dangers posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters — such as with regard to the skills required to prepare improvised explosive devices and weaponize drones.

Thirdly, ISIL's evolution from a proto-State structure into a covert network brings with it new challenges. For instance, ISIL's finances in the Middle East are harder to detect and analyse now that administrative functions to manage finances have gone underground. In the wake of its structural changes, ISIL remains able to channel funds across borders, often via intermediate countries, to their final destinations. Moreover, in considering ISIL's activities in various parts of the world from the Middle East, Africa — particularly North, West and East Africa — to Europe and Central, South and South-East Asia, the report notes ISIL's continuing presence and influence, particularly through its affiliates. ISIL has also continued attempts to expand its presence in Afghanistan, and the terrorist threat extending from Afghanistan into Central Asia is perceived to be increasing. In Indonesia, Jamaah Ansharut Daulah — an ISIL-linked local network of cells — launched a series of deadly suicide bombings in May, while setting the disturbing precedent of using families to launch attacks. In Europe, there are concerns about the high volume of commercially encrypted messages, as well as radicalization in prisons.

The report highlights that Member States and the international community must renew their efforts to effectively counter the rapidly evolving and transnational threat posed by ISIL. It also notes that the role of the Security Council has been instrumental in that regard, especially through the various resolutions it has adopted over the past few years on the various

aspects of countering terrorism, as well as on the threat posed by ISIL. The ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list also remains one of the key global instruments in that effort.

The Secretary-General's seventh report also provides updates on how the United Nations system is strengthening the coordination, coherence and effectiveness of its counter-terrorism efforts in support of Member States. It highlights the work being done by various United Nations entities, in particular the close partnership between my Office — the Office of Counter-Terrorism — and CTED, in cooperation with other entities such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNESCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UN-Women. Together, the United Nations system is striving to address critical aspects, such as countering the financing of terrorism; organized crime; border management and law enforcement; international judicial cooperation; prosecution; rehabilitation and reintegration; and countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities. In particular, United Nations counter-terrorism bodies have continued to focus on the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters.

The United Nations capacity-building implementation plan for countering the flow of foreign terrorist fighters, steered by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED, has been updated and streamlined to reflect the priorities identified in resolution 2396 (2017). It now consists of 40 projects to be implemented by 12 United Nations entities. More than 20 of the 40 projects focus specifically on returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters. To counter the threat posed by ISIL and terrorism more broadly, international cooperation, information-sharing and capacity-building are critical. Moreover, the increasing sophistication of methods used by terrorists requires counter-measures, particularly technological ones that are commensurately complex and advanced. All those topics were discussed by Member States at the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held this past June at the initiative of Secretary-General Guterres.

The Secretary-General remains firmly committed to supporting Member States in the fight against terrorism, including ISIL and its affiliates. In particular, he welcomes the Security Council's continued attention to the matter, as it is only through a sustained and

concerted multilateral response that we can address the scourge of terrorism.

As discussed with the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom in its capacity as President of the Security Council, I also avail myself of this opportunity to brief the Council on my visit to Afghanistan last week.

I travelled to Kabul from 14 to 15 August to participate in a conference organized by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. The Government of Afghanistan played a leading role in establishing the annual International Day of Remembrance on 21 August, through General Assembly resolution 72/165. In my keynote speech at the conference, I emphasized the need for solidarity with victims of terrorism in Afghanistan and around the world. I reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to listen to the victims of terrorism, respect their rights and provide them with support and justice. I also met with a large group of victims from across Afghanistan, who told me about the devastating impact of terrorism on their lives. They asked simple questions, which, however, were difficult to answer. For example: despite the preventive measures taken by the international community, why are terrorists still able to collect money, arms and ammunition and find new support that enables them to continue their horrible acts? We must look into that and other critical questions and meet the expectations of victims.

I am grateful that many Council members were able to join the Secretary-General and me last Friday at the launch of an exhibition to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. We must never forget the tens of thousands of people who have been injured, traumatized or lost their lives during terrorist attacks. Sixty-four thousand people were killed or injured in Afghanistan over the past nine years.

During my mission to Kabul, I also had an opportunity to hold high-level consultations with President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, Foreign Minister Rabbani and other Cabinet members and senior officials of the Government of Afghanistan responsible for countering terrorism. They told me that counter-terrorism efforts should be considered in the context of Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation process, while taking a long-term and regional

perspective. They also indicated that they are strongly in favour of the peace process. To that end, they all proposed organizing a high-level conference in Kabul next year, with the support of the United Nations and regional and international partners, to develop a regional counter-terrorism strategy with a focus on Afghanistan. I shared that idea with the Ambassadors of the permanent members of the Security Council and Central Asian Ambassadors, as well as with the Deputy Commander of NATO's Resolute Support Mission during my meetings with them in Kabul. Of course, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Yamamoto are involved in those discussions. They all expressed initial interest with regard to the idea of a conference.

The Government of Afghanistan also discussed its counter-terrorism priorities, including addressing the evolving threat from foreign terrorist fighters, border management and aviation security, the prevention of violent extremism and the links between terrorism and organized crime. I will consult further with UNAMA, the Department of Political Affairs, CTED and other United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities to discuss how best to support Afghan counter-terrorism efforts. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism looks forward to continuing to work closely with the Security Council, the Government of Afghanistan and other key regional and international partners to ensure a safe and secure future for the people of Afghanistan.

The President: I thank Mr. Voronkov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Coninx.

Ms. Coninx: I thank members for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov for providing an overview of the report, and his team for its collaboration in preparing it, on the basis of input from the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) and the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

As we have already heard, there can be no doubt that the threat from ISIL continues to evolve and

pose significant challenges to all actors involved in countering it. Such challenges derive in particular from, first, the ongoing transformation of ISIL into a global covert network; secondly, the activities of its regional affiliates throughout the world; and, thirdly, the potential threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters.

Approximately eight months have passed since the Council's adoption of resolution 2396 (2017), on the issue of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters. In my briefing today I wish to highlight three key challenges associated with that threat. Since the adoption of the first resolution on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters — resolution 2178 (2014), which focused on preventing fighters from travelling to conflict zones — the emphasis has shifted to fighters who relocate or who return to their countries of origin, nationality or to third countries. In CTED's engagement with Member States, we have identified the following trends in that regard.

First, although the number of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters is thus far not as high as some had feared, their unique situation nonetheless poses a range of challenges to Member States. States have experienced difficulties in conducting comprehensive risk assessments of foreign terrorist fighter returnees and their accompanying family members, as requested by resolution 2396 (2017). The prosecution of returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters also faces various evidentiary and jurisdictional challenges. In some cases, a revision of the existing legal framework is required. Prosecutors and investigators require specialized knowledge, including in the use of special investigative techniques that rely on modern technologies. They must often rely on evidence gathered by the military, or on digital evidence located on foreign servers. Strengthening judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance therefore remains vital. States must also develop tailored prosecution strategies for returning and relocating men, women and children. Although Member States have developed a range of rehabilitation and reintegration strategies and programmes, there is limited knowledge as to their effectiveness and impact.

Secondly, a significant number of foreign terrorist fighters have already entered the criminal-justice systems of some States, which places new demands on prisons and raises increasing concerns about the potential for in-prison radicalization. More work

is needed to address issues such as prison capacity and security, the conditions of, and treatment in, detention, the specific needs and risks associated with violent extremist prisoners and the development of non-custodial alternatives.

I would also like to draw the Council's attention to a third trend identified by CTED in its engagement with Member States. That new trend concerns the potential risks posed by the forthcoming release of imprisoned foreign terrorist fighters. States are increasingly concerned about the potential for some of those released fighters to re-engage in terrorist activities and radicalization to violence. Many States are uncertain about the effectiveness of risk-assessment and monitoring tools developed for such individuals, whether during their imprisonment or following their release. A number of foreign terrorist fighters have been given relatively short sentences, for various reasons, including, in some cases, lack of evidence of their involvement in terrorist activity in conflict zones. In such cases, Member States may have limited opportunities to engage at-risk individuals in rehabilitation and reintegration programmes prior to their release.

There is therefore the need to strengthen data-collection and information-sharing in that area, including on lessons learned, in order to ensure that rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are based on sound methodologies and implemented in full compliance with domestic law and international human rights law. CTED will continue to support Member States in their efforts to identify relevant good practices in that area.

Foreign terrorist fighters are only one threat emanating from ISIL and its associates. The complex and evolving threat posed by terrorism requires us to remain ever-vigilant and alert. In our country assessment visits on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, we continue to highlight the importance of effective implementation by Member States of the relevant Council resolutions, including resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017). Over the past six months, Member States and United Nations entities have continued to develop innovative ways to address the threat. Allow me to highlight just a few.

We continue to support Member States in the use of the most up-to-date technologies to secure their borders. Resolution 2396 (2017) introduced several

new requirements in that regard, including the use of advance passenger information and passenger name record systems, as well as biometrics. We shall continue to assist States to ensure that those technologies are used effectively and responsively, in full compliance with international law, including human rights law, and with due regard to privacy and data-protection concerns.

One important milestone in that regard was the recent publication of the United Nations Compendium of Recommended Practices for the Responsible Use and Sharing of Biometrics in Counter-Terrorism. Another was the recent publication, pursuant to resolution 2396 (2017), of the Compendium of Good Practices on the Protection of Critical Infrastructure against Terrorist Attacks.

We also continue to forge new and innovative partnerships with the private sector, particularly in the area of information and communications technologies. We are cooperating with not only some of the big names in the industry, but also small enterprises and start-ups. That engagement is essential — for example, with respect to gathering digital evidence in terrorism cases. CTED, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Association of Prosecutors are developing guidance for requesting and gathering electronic evidence across borders, including from private communications service providers, and will publish a practical guide for Member States in September.

The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Legal and Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism is also finalizing United Nations guidelines to facilitate the use and admissibility of information and evidence collected, preserved and shared by the military.

I wish to stress that our continued engagement with civil society, including women's groups, is essential to ensuring a holistic, whole-of-society approach to countering terrorism and violent extremism. Our dialogue with the research community, particularly through CTED's Global Counter-Terrorism Research Network, continues to provide new insights and contributes to our analysis of the latest trends and developments.

The global fight against ISIL and its affiliates continues. The United Nations system, including CTED and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, continues to strengthen its coordination and coherence in order to

assess implementation gaps, identify good practices and deliver the necessary technical assistance to Member States. Our unity and joint efforts are as vital now as ever before.

The President: I thank Ms. Coninx for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Cook.

Ms. Cook: I thank the Security Council for inviting me here today to discuss the report I recently co-authored with Gina Vale. It is an honour for me to present our research on the strategic, tactical and operational engagement of women and minors by Da'esh, an issue which we believe requires immediate and urgent attention. While this is a critical concern related to Da'esh in particular, it is also increasingly reflected in other jihadist groups today.

Our research has demonstrated the scale of this concern. For the first time, we are able to demonstrate with evidence that across 80 countries and of the estimated 41,490 foreign citizens that became affiliated with Da'esh, 13 per cent are women and 12 per cent are minors. That includes at least 730 infants born in-theatre to foreign parents. Women and minors therefore represent one in four recorded foreigners to become affiliated with Da'esh. These figures are unprecedented for a terrorist organization, and also serve to emphasize the need to consider the broader networks of persons affiliated with such groups beyond only fighters.

We believe this to be a vast underestimation, based on current gaps in data. Of the 80 countries reviewed only 26 provide publicly reliable figures for both women and minors. We therefore still do not have a full understanding of the scale and scope of this concern. Those statistics also exclude those who were prevented from traveling to Iraq and Syria and local women and minors within the conflict zone who may have become affiliated with Da'esh —whether willingly or coercively. Women and minors are vastly underestimated and underanalysed groups. As such, they risk being neglected in all assessments and full-spectrum responses related to Da'esh.

Why were so many women drawn to Da'esh? By presenting itself as an ideologically pure, State-building project and holding and administering territory between 2014 up to late 2017, it gave women an opportunity, a perceived stake and sense of purpose in building that proto-State. It drew persons as diverse as schoolgirls

to grandmothers from five continents. Those women expressed feelings of discrimination, oppression and disenfranchisement in the communities they left behind, and believed Da'esh offered them something meaningful through roles ranging from citizens, mothers and wives, to public sector workers. Women within that territory and abroad also sought and carried out more nefarious roles and acted as police, recruiters, fundraisers and disseminators of propaganda, mobilizing both men and women for Da'esh.

Da'esh achieved the support of women through targeted, gendered recruitment efforts in its multilingual propaganda, which utilized language and imagery that emphasized women's rights, empowerment and a sense of purpose and belonging offered by their caliphate. It also exploited their personal and political grievances, framed their participation as a religious obligation and promised services ranging from free health care and education to marriage arrangements, among others.

The factors that pushed individuals out of their societies and pulled them towards Da'esh and its ideology are diverse, complex and have to be understood and assessed on an individual basis. We also recognize that levels of agency and motivation differed for each person. Some women were ideologically committed and actively sought to support Da'esh, travelling independently or with their children or families, while others were subject to varying levels of coercion.

Da'esh also sought to promote the recruitment of minors within and beyond its physical territory, raising its "cubs" as the future fighters and ideological guardians of its caliphate project. The group's propaganda has displayed systematic indoctrination of boys and girls throughout its education system. For boys in particular, enrolment in military training camps was mandatory, with the aim to psychologically and physically recondition young recruits to fight and engage in violence. Through such efforts, Da'esh has sought to project an image of strength, bolster its fighting force and even weaponize minors.

Similar to women, minors are not a homogeneous group. They experienced diverse recruitment pathways into Da'esh and held varied roles. Those roles range from passive citizens of the so-called caliphate and child brides, to spies, combatants and executioners. We therefore recommend three sub-categories of Da'esh-affiliated minors in line with gender and age considerations as an indicator of the various levels of

individual agency and, therefore, accountability. These categories are infants under 4 years of age, many of whom were likely born inside Da'esh territory; children aged 5 to 14, who mostly appeared to be taken by their parents or guardians; and teenagers from ages 15 to 17, some of whom travelled independently.

The physical fall of the so-called caliphate represented a significant turning point for the group. However, we do not believe this to be the end of its relevance or activities, only a period of evolution, and therefore a particularly important time to assess the current and future status of its affiliates, including women and minors. An estimated 7,366 Da'esh affiliates, or 20 per cent, have now returned to their countries of departure, or appear to be in repatriation processes to do so. However, only 256, or 4 per cent, of total returnees are recorded as women. In contrast, up to 1,180 — 17 per cent — of total returnees are recorded as minors, suggesting that some Member States have prioritized the repatriation of minors.

The current status of the significant number of women and minors beyond returnees also requires immediate attention and clarification. We have identified women and minors as detainees in Iraq and Syria, in internally displaced persons camps, as persons still associated with Da'esh in Iraq and Syria, as those in third-party countries, and some who have been killed. More concerning perhaps are the vast numbers whose status remains unknown. We also highlight important concerns related to the status of orphaned and stateless minors, whose only identity may have been one affiliated with Da'esh and who require particularly targeted and tailored interventions.

We believe that women are poised to play an important role in carrying forward the ideology and legacy of Da'esh. That view is based on a number of considerations, including the motivation of some to pass on that ideology to their children, the nefarious and support roles they held in Da'esh, shifting discourses related to women's roles within the group, and the combat training some women received under Da'esh. Numerous attacks — both successful and foiled — have served to demonstrate the security risk some women can pose.

Minors have likely been largely traumatized by the Da'esh violence they witnessed and, in some cases, actively conducted. There is evidence that male-child and teenage "cubs" have already been engaged in

suicide attacks beyond Da'esh's immediate territory, and the group's propaganda continues to call for, and inspire its soldiers of all ages to conduct, guided and independent attacks overseas. However, we also recognize that many women and minors are unlikely to become security threats, and may instead seek to disengage from the group and its ideology. Our research has reaffirmed the critical importance of integrating considerations related to gender and age in assessing the range of threats posed by Da'esh and its affiliates, while ensuring that is reflected in common vulnerabilities and exposures, and military, criminal justice, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

This moment presents both exceptional challenges for us as an international community as well an opportunity. We now have an evidence base that recognizes that women and minors, as two distinct and nuanced groups, must be accounted for in our understanding of contemporary terrorist and violent extremist groups. Only by having a stronger evidence base, both qualitatively and quantitatively, will we be able to develop more effective, holistic and sustainable responses.

The President: I thank Ms. Cook for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Coninx for their briefings on the report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security (S/2018/770). We would also like to welcome Ms. Joana Cook and thank her for sharing the key findings of her report on Da'esh women and minors, which shows the value of inviting civil society and researchers to inform our discussions.

In the summer of 2014, Da'esh swept down the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, capturing thousands of square miles of Iraq and Syria and imposing its pitiless rule on millions of people in an area that was once the cradle of civilization. Over the next three years, attacks that were directed, inspired or enabled by Da'esh would claim more than 30,000 lives, including 181 attacks outside Iraq and Syria. The world responded by forming a global coalition to defeat this threat, and military action by many countries, including my own, has driven Da'esh from almost all of its domain and liberated millions from its oppression. But the point I

wish to emphasize today is that Da'esh has not been vanquished, and that the root causes of its emergence have yet to be resolved.

Britain shares the assessment of the Secretary-General's report that Da'esh is responding to the loss of territory by evolving into a covert terrorist network, with branches as far apart as Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen. Da'esh takes advantage of ungoverned space and weak States. Its terrorists do not necessarily require central direction, and they have demonstrated their ability to strike in Europe and South-East Asia.

The report of the Secretary-General estimates that as many as 20,000 Da'esh fighters remain in Syria and Iraq, among them citizens of many countries. Around 900 people with links to the United Kingdom have travelled to join the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Around 40 per cent returned to the United Kingdom in the early days Da'esh's so-called caliphate, and some 20 per cent are believed dead. The rest are still in Iraq, Syria or elsewhere. Our response to this enduring threat should fall into two parts.

First, we must press on with military operations against Da'esh. British forces continue to play their part as members of the global coalition, and the United Kingdom leads in the vital area of strategic communications against Da'esh. This year the British Government has committed another £20 million to counter-terrorism projects in countries we assess to be most at risk from returning foreign fighters.

Secondly, we should renew our focus on prevention by addressing the root causes of the emergence of Da'esh, which means doing more to support peace and reconciliation in Iraq and a lasting political settlement in Syria. It also means responding to specific humanitarian problems. For example, up to 20 per cent of foreign fighters globally are women and girls. Almost 10 per cent of the 40,000 individuals who travelled to join Da'esh were minors, many of whom have witnessed or experienced horrific violence and been exposed to radicalization. Some will be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. We need to act to prevent those minors from becoming the next generation of terrorists.

The United Nations has a vital role to play in the struggle against Da'esh, consistent with the responsibility of the Security Council to address threats to international peace and security. The Council made air travel more secure by adopting resolution 2309

(2016), the first-ever resolution on aviation security, and it addressed the threat from foreign fighters in resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017). Earlier, in 2005, the Council adopted resolution 1624 (2005), condemning incitement and repudiating all attempts to justify or glorify acts of terrorism. The Council should be willing to consider further action in order to counter the use of the Internet by terrorists for propaganda and fundraising.

Prevention is a key pillar of the United Kingdom's approach to counter-terrorism. Our aim is to identify anyone at risk of radicalization. We seek to reintegrate them into society. Agencies and local Governments, from health, education, social services and the police, routinely meet to identify individuals at risk and refer them to programmes run by specialists in deradicalization. That approach, which focuses on prevention rather than prosecution after a crime has been committed, has caused more than 500 people to turn away from terrorism in the United Kingdom. We have learned lessons over the years and refined our "prevent" programme. We stand ready to share our experiences with countries that face similar problems.

Societies that are confident in their beliefs and values and hold Governments to account are societies that are resistant to the virus of terrorism. The key to success is partnership among many nations. We must not lose sight of the importance of those partnerships, even as Da'esh loses its grip on Syria and Iraq. I look forward to our discussion today on how we can act together to prevent and counter the evolving threat from Da'esh.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. Foreign Secretary, for coming to preside over this very important briefing. Welcome you to New York.

The United States is grateful for the United Kingdom's unwavering commitment to the fight against terrorism. It is a vital member of the global coalition to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), and we appreciate its continued leadership on the issue. We also thank our briefers.

Just three years ago, ISIS was on a rampage. These terrorists seized Iraq's second-largest city and threatened the capital. In northern Syria, ISIS used its safe haven to plan attacks and radicalize new recruits.

It was a threat that no civilized nation could ignore. The United States stepped up to face that challenge. We did not face it alone. We rallied a global coalition to defeat ISIS — a partnership of like-minded States and organizations to confront that evil. Our ranks grew, and that global coalition now totals an incredible 77 members.

Together, we have made significant progress. Iraq was able to declare its territory liberated from ISIS. The coalition has driven ISIS out of much of its former territory and Syria. However, the fight is not over. A committed core of ISIS fighters remains in Iraq and Syria. They are a resilient enemy, and so we must remain vigilant. After coming so far, we do not want to give ISIS room to regroup. Our hard work will continue to make sure that ISIS faces an enduring defeat. That is why we work with our partners to help the victims to rebuild. In Iraq and Syria, our coalition partners have been clearing rubble, defusing mines and restoring electricity and other services. That has allowed 150,000 Syrians to return to what used to be the ISIS capital, Raqqa, since the city was liberated. That work will continue for some time thanks to the generous contributors of approximately \$300 million in new stabilizing funds.

We welcome the leadership of those partners in stepping up to address such challenges. Our shared contributions show the enduring strength of that global coalition. However, sadly, defeating ISIS in Iraq and Syria will not be the end of the story. As we have heard, the hateful ideology of ISIS has taken root in new corners of the world — places such as Afghanistan, Nigeria, Libya, Somalia and the Sinai. The lesson in that regard is that ISIS is an enemy that adapts and one that will seek out the world's ungoverned spaces. We must deny ISIS a safe haven. In many of those places that means putting real pressure on parties to end conflicts that have dragged on for years. We need to focus on building up State authority and extending the reach of institutions so that ISIS does not have the breathing room to expand and to plot new attacks.

We also cannot forget the enduring threat posed by Al-Qaida. ISIS may have captured more headlines in recent years but the leaders of Al-Qaida are still plotting attacks around the world. That includes a large remaining Al-Qaida presence in Syria, Yemen and other parts of the world. The future of our fight against terrorism will look different than the challenges that came before. Our enemies no longer control large

pieces of territory, spanning multiple countries. They hide in the shadows or in places where Governments hide them or look the other way. Such terrorists never cease to look for new opportunities, and so we cannot let down our guard.

We know the tools that will be critical to that fight. The United States led the way in negotiating resolution 2396 (2017), which sets the highest standards for States to disrupt the travel of foreign terrorist fighters. Every Member State must implement that resolution in full in order to break up the routes that terrorists use to get from one battlefield to another. That means making sure that Member States use and share the latest technology, such as passenger name records, watchlists and biometrics, in order to identify threats trying to cross our borders. Screening all travellers with those tools is an essential step.

Member States need to come up with strategies to address fighters who may try to return to their homes. As one of our briefers mentioned today, it is not only men, but also women and children, who may have tried to join terrorist groups. Under resolution 2396 (2017), every Government must focus on a comprehensive plan to prosecute, rehabilitate and reintegrate foreign terrorist fighters and their families.

We must also make full use of our sanctions regimes so as to deny funding to terrorist groups and the entities that continue to support them. Where force is necessary, the United States will deepen its long-standing partnerships with countries fighting terrorism. Above all, we will never hesitate to act to protect the American people from the threat of terrorism.

Today, while we look back at the campaign against ISIS, we must prepare for tomorrow's challenges. We must maintain our resolve, and we will prevail. There is no doubt about how the story will end. The forces of terror will never win. The fight against terror will take different forms, but the outcome is certain. The United States will continue to be a force in the effort against ISIS and Al-Qa'ida until we defeat the threat.

Mr. Llorenty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a true pleasure to have you, Sir, preside over this Security Council meeting.

My delegation is grateful for the briefings today by Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and by Ms. Michele Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism

Committee Executive Directorate, to whom we reiterate our greatest support for their important work. We also appreciate the informative presentation by Ms. Joana Cook of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation.

The threat posed by terrorism and extremism has surpassed local and regional dimensions to become a global problem that represents one of the greatest challenges facing the international community today, particularly because terrorist groups and organizations have developed capacities to coordinate their criminal acts through various platforms, including digital ones, as well as to recruit people remotely using different means and narratives.

In light of that, it is necessary to reiterate that terrorism cannot, and should not, be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group. Such characteristics should not be used to justify for any reason measures to combat or to prevent terrorism.

As has been noted, a clear example of the threat represented by terrorism can be seen in foreign terrorist fighters, whose return to their countries of origin and their movement across areas of conflict are a source of concern that calls for greater action on the part of States. The fact that since 2011 more than 30,000 combatants from approximately 100 countries have travelled primarily to Syria and Iraq demonstrates the magnitude of the problem, all the more so given the increasing victories in eliminating Da'esh.

It is important to bear in mind that foreign terrorist fighters did not emerge suddenly or spontaneously. Rather, they are the product of a process of ideological radicalization and, once on the ground, of military training in handling weapons and explosive devices, including improvised explosive devices, which, according to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), and as Ms. Cook noted, has even involved entire families, including women and children. It is therefore necessary to realize that the most influential factors in recruiting people are linked to their socioeconomic situation and their vulnerability when presented with promises of material and personal benefits, as well as claims of ideological or sectarian beliefs. That must of course go hand in hand with an analysis and assessment of the structural causes of the rise of terrorism, which include regime-change policies and interventionism.

The fight against and the prevention of terrorism must also focus on implementing measures of development, inclusion and dialogue, as established by pillars I and II of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Similarly, the implementation of resolutions 2178 (2014) and 2396 (2017), which propose parameters to deal with the problem of foreign terrorist fighters, take on particular importance when drafting strategies and taking decisions.

In addition, the link between terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations associated with crimes such as people smuggling, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of weapons, ammunition, oil, its by-products and cultural and heritage assets is increasingly evident, since by perpetrating such crimes those organizations gather economic resources and legitimize them through money-laundering and other mechanisms that seek to undermine or to eliminate State control. We must identify these networks and payment mechanisms so as to take concrete actions to eliminate the capacity of these criminal and terrorist organizations to avail themselves of economic and financial resources. It is also crucial that the international community focus its efforts on investigating whether terrorist groups have access to tax havens and to take joint actions to eliminate them.

We must also strengthen States' capacities to fight decisively against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. To that end, the cooperation, joint work and assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate are, of course, of paramount importance.

In that light, we reiterate that all of the efforts deployed by the Security Council and our Organization to counter terrorism must enjoy the greatest possible support and participation of Member States and aim to strengthen the capacity of States both in the domain of prevention and in counter-terrorism efforts, in full respect of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States. Likewise, accountability before the law is vital so that those responsible for committing such criminal acts are duly investigated, prosecuted and punished with the greatest severity, pursuant to international law.

In that regard, my delegation once again expresses its strong support for the transparent and balanced implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-

Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars. We call on the entire international community to act decisively in the struggle against this scourge, using all the means provided by the Charter of the United Nations to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the framework of international law and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, wish to thank Mr. Voronkov for his informative briefing on the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh (S/2018/770). I thank also Ms. Coninx and Ms. Cook for their very enlightening briefings. I wish specifically to commend the outstanding work done by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation through its report on the return of women and minors affiliated with Da'esh.

The report of the Secretary-General underscores the fact that despite the loss of its territorial foothold, Da'esh continues to pose a grave threat, both locally and globally. Its transformation into a global underground network, the widespread network of foreign terrorist fighters and the appeal of terrorist propaganda only make the threat more resilient. In the face of an enemy that is endlessly adapting, our responses, too, must evolve.

I wish therefore to stress four areas where France believes that our efforts can and must be scaled up.

I turn first to the operations of the international coalition against Da'esh. These must continue so as to see through to completion the struggle against the terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria following the decisive victories over that group, which has lost virtually all of its territory. In order to prevent its resurgence, our military actions are complemented by efforts on the civilian front aimed at a lasting stabilization of the areas liberated from Da'esh and at reconstruction where possible, such as in Iraq, in keeping with the pledges made at the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, held in February. It is important that all stakeholders and the United Nations system remain mobilized and that their efforts be translated into tangible progress for the peoples concerned.

We must also eradicate the root causes of terrorism through the implementation of pluralist and inclusive political solutions in Syria and Iraq that meet the deep-seated and legitimate concerns of the people. Putting an end to impunity for the crimes perpetrated by Da'esh in the Levant is vital to rebuilding inclusive and peaceful

societies. I am specifically thinking here of the grave violations perpetrated by Da'esh against children and of the sexual violence against and the enslavement of more than 6,000 Yazidis. In that vein, France reiterates its full support for the independent international investigative mechanisms established by the United Nations to shed light on the serious crimes committed in Syria and Iraq and call on all States Members of the United Nations and the system as a whole to work hand in hand to that end.

The second area where we need to redouble our efforts is the struggle against the financing of terrorism, which is a top priority for France. Although the loss of territory has significantly reduced Da'esh's revenues, the group has devised increasingly sophisticated adaptation strategies. Our legal and operational frameworks must therefore also be consistently adapted and strengthened so as to enhance the transparency of financial flows, the sharing of information and cooperation with the private sector.

To that end, last April France organized an international conference on combating financing for Da'esh and Al-Qaida that brought together 70 States and some 20 international organizations. It culminated in the adoption of the Paris Agenda, which represents an effective road map for stepping up our commitment, and we call for the implementation of the commitments undertaken within that framework.

Thirdly, we must continue our efforts to counter Internet use by terrorist groups. A significant amount of progress has been achieved and Internet companies have mobilized, but a great deal remains to be done, as demonstrated by the broadcasting of a nearly one-hour statement by Omar Al-Baghdadi on Telegram on 22 August. We will continue our efforts, including at the European level, to more effectively obstruct the dissemination of terrorist propaganda, which fuels radicalization, and the use of the Internet for the financing of terrorism.

Finally, the relocation and return of foreign terrorist fighters remains a more pervasive threat that our countries must address. In the face of this challenge, whose complexity was eloquently described by Ms. Coninx, we must step up our efforts to track, monitor and follow up individuals who pose a risk through the consistent sharing of information. In the light of the diversity of the profiles concerned, close cooperation between military, civilian and financial

intelligence services and agencies and with the judicial authorities is vital to strengthen the nexus between intelligence and the actions of criminal justice.

Education, social services and justice are vital to assist families. Through our national mechanism, France emphasizes specifically caring for children at the social, psychological and educational levels, in order to facilitate their integration. We will therefore host in Paris next September a regional meeting organized by the Office of Counter-Terrorism on dealing, with full respect for human rights, with children who accompany foreign terrorist fighters.

I wish to stress the unifying role that the United Nations must continue to play in the fight against terrorism, specifically in areas where Da'esh has established a presence or that it has infiltrated. France will continue to provide support to United Nations bodies in their efforts to identify needs and the responses required as well as in the promotion of coordination among all concerned stakeholders in the wake of the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held here in late June.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Mr. President, let me start by thanking you for having come to the Security Council. It is a true honour to have you personally presiding over our meeting today. Allow me also to take this opportunity to thank you and your great team here in New York for a very effective and efficient presidency of the Council.

Turning to today's discussion, I would like to thank Mr. Voronkov, Ms. Coninx and Ms. Cook for their briefings.

In my intervention, I will focus on three issues: first, the threat of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) and our response; secondly, the role of women and children; and, thirdly, accountability.

First, on the threat and our response, we just heard that the threat posed by ISIS has changed but certainly not diminished. This calls for a coherent international response. As ISIS changes into a covert network, we have to invest in financial intelligence and in public-private partnerships to counter its financing.

As ISIS strengthens its affiliates around the world, we have to focus on prevention and on the resilience of local communities. And as ISIS fighters return and relocate, we have to detect and counter the travel

movements of terrorists through passenger name record systems. We must strengthen international cooperation in this field.

Terrorism continues to warrant our utmost attention. We cannot give in to counter-terrorism fatigue. We have to invest in international cooperation.

My second point focuses on the role of women and children. The briefing by Ms. Cook today served to underscore the importance of civil society involvement for preventing and countering violent extremism. We need a whole-of-society approach, and women and youngsters are key in that regard. At the same time, as Ms. Cook pointed out, we must acknowledge that women with ISIS may also be perpetrators of terrorist acts, while minors with ISIS are first and foremost victims, but may also pose a threat. Dealing with women and minors with ISIS therefore requires a case-by-case approach that integrates prevention, prosecution and rehabilitation.

With that in mind, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States work very closely together in the framework of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). Together we have collected good practices to address the challenges of returning families of foreign terrorist fighters. Those good practices have led to practical guidelines, which will be endorsed at the GCTF ministerial meeting on 26 September here in New York. As Council members may be aware, the GCTF is co-chaired by Morocco and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We will make sure that those guidelines are made available to all Member States.

That brings me to my third point: accountability. We need to ensure that impunity for terrorism will not prevail. One of our key priorities in the Council is accountability. The Kingdom of the Netherlands favours the establishment of a specialized court for international crimes, as proposed by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We also continue to support efforts by the Investigative Team in Iraq and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria to collect evidence against ISIS fighters. We look forward to the Council's first briefing, in December, by the Special Adviser of the Investigative Team, and call on all Member States to cooperate with and support the Independent Mechanism. We must unite in holding ISIS fighters accountable for their heinous acts, in particular war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

In conclusion, last Friday here at the United Nations we remembered and paid tribute to the victims of terrorism. We heard impactful statements from the Secretary-General and Mr. Voronkov. But we also heard the personal stories of the families of victims of terrorism and of survivors of attacks. We felt the real-life sorrow behind our discussion today. If we need any further motivation to transform our words into deeds, let it be the brave voices of the victims and survivors of terrorist acts who spoke here at the United Nations: they are counting on us, and we owe it to them.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome your presence here today, Sir, thank you for convening this meeting and commend the excellent work of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations in conducting its presidency of the Council this month. We also thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Ms. Michèle Coninx and Ms. Joana Cook for their briefings.

We note with concern that the so-called Islamic State, although weakened, nonetheless continues to become a covert global organization with a strong presence in Iraq and Syria and, through affiliated organizations, other areas of the Middle East and Asia as well as on the continent of Africa. In that context, we would like to highlight the focus the United Nations has placed on the counter-terrorism agenda over the past six months, as reflected in both the sixth Biennial Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the successful holding of the first High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, in late June.

Despite the military setbacks the international community has inflicted on Da'esh, the terrorist organization is seeking to maintain its influence by using the Internet and social networks to instigate, mobilize and direct its followers to perpetrate attacks in their countries of origin as well as to raise funds and attract new followers. I underscore the need to continue strengthening policies aimed at counteracting such manifestations of global terrorism. That includes promoting the development of critical thinking in the digital realm among the target audiences for such propaganda, especially young people.

Moreover, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), the return or relocation of foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the growing number of "frustrated travelers", also represent significant

threats, albeit to a lesser extent than anticipated. We therefore underscore the need to pursue comprehensive criminal justice strategies that incorporate full respect for human rights and due process. Such strategies must also take gender into account and integrate an approach aimed at safeguarding the rights of children, especially when it comes to the families of returning or relocating fighters.

I must draw particular attention to the role of prisons when foreign terrorist fighters enter national criminal justice systems: it is essential to ensure that prisons do not serve as venues for further radicalization and recruitment.

Da'esh financing is further cause for particular concern, especially as the organization operates in a covert manner and no longer tries to administer larger territories, although it maintains some sources of income from oil wells in eastern Syria, forced expropriations and kidnappings. Against that backdrop, it is crucial for Member States to bear in mind that, in addition to strengthening financial intelligence systems, it is important to take measures to monitor cash used by terrorists.

In connection with this problem, we must draw attention to the increasingly clear links between transnational organized crime and terrorist organizations — a reality reflected in the report, especially the links between terrorist financing and money laundering, as well as other sources, including trafficking in people, drugs and weapons. In that regard, we deem it essential to gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics, as stressed in the Security Council presidential statement of 8 May 2018 (S/PRST/2018/9).

We reiterate that the crimes must not go unpunished. We must ensure accountability. To do so, the collection of evidence in conflict zones and of digital evidence represent a principal challenge. We therefore welcome the progress made by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, as well as the operationalization of the Investigative Team into crimes committed in Iraq.

We also welcome the appointment of the Ombudsperson to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, which will allow that important

subsidiary body to function in accordance with rules guaranteeing due process.

Our Organization, and the Security Council in particular, has a fundamental role to play in tackling terrorist threats, fostering cooperation among all Member States and among regional and subregional organizations, and it can count on the fullest commitment of my delegation in that regard.

Mr. Almunayekhh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their valuable briefings on the threats that Da'esh poses to international peace and security.

I would like to focus in my statement on three main issues: first, the threat posed by Da'esh; secondly, technology and terrorist groups; and, thirdly, the desired international cooperation.

First, with regard to the threat posed by Da'esh, despite the fact that it is diminishing in Iraq and Syria, Da'esh is still capable of threatening regional peace and security. It is estimated at having 20,000 combatants today, who are able to quickly adapt to the conditions in which they operate. It has transformed from a regional entity into a covert network, which is difficult to track and whose financial resources difficult to trace. The phenomenon of returning and relocating terrorist fighters and their families poses a threat to their own countries as well as to third countries, given the field military expertise they have acquired. That requires that we all adopt a comprehensive and collective approach by taking precautionary measures to address the phenomenon, including through exchanging information on the matter. In that regard, we commend the support that the United Nations is offering to Member States in the area of capacity-building for counter-terrorism.

Secondly, with respect to technology and terrorist groups, social networking continues to constitute an important resource for terrorist groups to spread their radical ideologies. That requires us to enhance international efforts to cooperate on adopting measures to prevent and fight those groups that exploit technology and communications. In that regard, we commend

the initiatives launched by the United Nations within the framework of enhanced cooperation with small technology companies and Governments with a view to limiting the capacity of terrorists to use the Internet for their terrorist purposes.

Thirdly, pertaining to the desired international cooperation, the State of Kuwait would like to underscore the importance of international cooperation to address the threat posed by terrorist fighters, including in the following areas: exchanging information, border security, improving protection, dealing with the circumstances that lead to the spread of terrorism and preventing incitement to terrorist acts. We must also limit the financial support that is available to terrorist fighters, conduct and implement threat assessments of terrorist fighters, and in addition to all that make efforts to undertake judicial prosecutions, rehabilitation and reintegration, in line with international law.

We also encourage bolstering international cooperation between States and international organizations such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, with a view to exchanging information and expertise and implementing joint counter-terrorism programmes. Moreover, we encourage Member States to take advantage of relevant programmes being offered by the United Nations and its specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations.

We underscore the need to hold accountable those responsible for committing terrorist acts and violations of human rights. In that regard, we support the Investigative Team that was established by the Security Council in resolution 2379 (2017) to support efforts aimed at holding Da'esh accountable for the crimes it perpetrated in Iraq.

In the context of the efforts made by the State of Kuwait as a member of the coalition to fight Da'esh at the international level, my country hosted a ministerial meeting for the international coalition against Da'esh on 13 February, in which 70 States and four international organizations participated to formulate strategies and plans to combat terrorism. It was the first meeting of its kind since Da'esh was defeated in Iraq.

The State of Kuwait condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations regardless of the motivations behind it. Terrorism constitutes a criminal act that is unjustifiable and must not be linked to any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnicity. Combating

terrorism requires mobilizing all international efforts to confront that criminal scourge by adopting measures that guarantee respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as the peaceful coexistence of religions and respect for their symbols and sanctity, while dealing with the conditions that lead to the spread of terrorism, stopping incitement to hatred and rejecting all forms of extremism and violence.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (spoke in Chinese): China thanks Under-Secretary-General Voronkov and Executive Director Coninx for their briefings. China also welcomes the report of Secretary-General Guterres (S/2018/770) on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to international peace and security. China also paid close attention to the statement made by Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

The recent successful terrorist attacks that took place in Afghanistan and Syria resulted in tremendous harm to the countries concerned. Terrorism is the common enemy of humankind and affects countries beyond their national borders. It is hard for any country to respond to it alone. Faced with such a challenge, and bound by a shared destiny, the international community should effectively implement a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable security concept, effectively carry out the relevant Security Council resolutions and strengthen cooperation to jointly respond to the threat of terrorism in the light of its new trend and characteristics.

First, with respect to further building international consensus on counter-terrorism, the international community should adhere to a unified standard and adopt a zero-tolerance and non-discriminatory stance in resolutely combating terrorists, regardless of location, pretext, targeted countries or the means used. In fighting terrorism at the international level, we should respect the sovereignty of the countries in question, as well as the main responsibility of the countries concerned to fight terrorism and abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and allow the United Nations, including the Security Council, to play its leading role.

Secondly, we must make joint efforts to address the root causes of terrorism. The international community should push for a political settlement of regional issues, assist Member States in achieving their economic and

social development and poverty reduction and alleviation goals, refrain from linking terrorism to specific ethnic or religious groups and promote dialogue on an equal footing among civilizations and religions with a view to fostering harmonious coexistence and endeavouring to build a new type of international relations.

Thirdly, with regard to disrupting the terrorist network of cross-border movement, terrorist organizations have recently suffered heavy losses in Iraq and Syria. However, terrorist fighters' movements and returns still pose a serious threat to the security and stability of countries of origin, transit and destination. The countries concerned should strengthen cross-border control and law enforcement cooperation, share intelligence resources and strengthen capacities to jointly deter the flow of terrorist fighters.

Fourthly, we must fight terrorist activities conducted by terrorist organizations through the Internet. Cyberspace and social media have become an important means for terrorist organizations to incite terrorist activities, recruit fighters and plan attacks. The international community should strengthen regulations on the Internet and block terrorist organizations from using the Internet to spread extremist ideologies and conduct terrorist financing. The United Nations counter-terrorism bodies should strengthen coordination and help the broader developing membership to strengthen counter-terrorism capacity-building in cyberspace.

China is an important member in the international fight against terrorism. In recent years, China has been deeply involved in the work of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, such as the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, actively taken part in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy review and the high-level meeting of Member States against terrorism and assisted Members in their counter-terrorism capacity-building through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, thereby making an important contribution to the international fight against terrorism.

China will continue participate in and promote multilateral and bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation and provide assistance to developing countries in terms of counter-terrorism measures and capacity-building. China wants to work together with all countries to jointly address the threat of terrorism and violent extremism in safeguarding world peace and stability.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Executive Director Michèle Coninsx and Ms. Joana Cook for their informative briefings. Let me also express my gratitude to the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism for the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat.

The efforts of those bodies in providing strategic-level reporting and the increasing cooperation among them with other stakeholders are most appreciated. While acknowledging that the authorities of United Nations Member States bear the primary responsibility to stand up to the evolving threat posed by terrorists, we should encourage, support and commend the engagement of international, religious and civil society organizations, as well as academia and the private sector. Moreover, the fight against terrorists must be carried out in accordance with international human rights standards. In the long run, it requires also addressing the root causes of terrorism, including poor development perspectives and human rights situations. Let me focus on four issues of the utmost importance in countering Da'esh.

First, with regard to preventing attacks by Da'esh and the spread of its network, although ISIL might have lost control of territories in Iraq and Syria, it remains a threat in both States and beyond, including through foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist groups and the related relocation phenomenon. Efforts must be continued to stop the creation and expansion of Da'esh and affiliated cells in South-East Asia, Libya, Afghanistan, West Africa and other regions and countries. Their members' cowardly attacks, like the one in May in Indonesia, must be prevented. Enhancing border management and law enforcement is crucial in that regard. While recognizing efforts aimed at raising standards and strengthening cooperation within those areas, we call for their further development.

Secondly, concerning stopping the financing of terrorism, we have to step up efforts in cracking down on sources and flows of funding for ISIL, including businesses in which its members have reportedly invested. We should also identify and address the risk

of abusing new payment modalities for terrorism-financing purposes, in particular in countries in which they remain unregulated. Member States should strengthen their financial intelligence, use of counter-terrorism financing tools and fulfil their obligation to freeze the assets of all entities on the Da'esh and Al-Qaida sanctions list. The assistance of the United Nations and other relevant actors in that area is vital. We welcome efforts to that end and encourage their continuation.

Thirdly, with regard to ensuring accountability and non-recurrence, given the relocation of foreign fighters and their families, international judicial cooperation, as well as terrorist prosecution, rehabilitation and integration efforts, has to be redoubled. That requires stepping up the collection, analysis and sharing of data, including evidence, which should be conducted in compliance with human rights and the rule of law. It also requires the development of relevant partnerships and strategies, including for the post-release context of those convicted of terrorism within prison systems. The challenges associated with their return to society must be properly addressed. We welcome the relevant work that has been done in that area, including the initiative mentioned in the report, and support its development.

With regard to countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities, although I welcome the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to countering violent extremism adopted by United Nations entities, I would also like to emphasize the gender dimension. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by terrorists, and therefore adequate personnel and facilities need to be in place to provide tailored responses for female victims of terrorism, in accordance with resolution 2331 (2016). I agree with the report's observation that the full inclusion and empowerment of women are crucial to the success of programmes to prevent violent extremism and counter-terrorism. I encourage adopting measures promoting the systematic involvement of women and support for women's initiatives in that regard. The inclusion of religious leaders and young people is also crucial and should be encouraged.

In conclusion, let me assure you, Mr. President, that Poland, a member of the global coalition against Da'esh, will not stop in its efforts to combat ISIL's activities. We call on all others to do the same, and we remain ready to cooperate to that end.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank the United Kingdom presidency for convening this briefing. We welcome Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, whom we are honoured to see presiding over today's meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov, Head of the Office of Counter-Terrorism; Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED); and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their insightful remarks. My delegation would like to make the following observations and recommendations.

We see a definite changing trend in the tactics related to terrorist acts in the world today, which can be described as low-cost, localized terrorism. The weakening of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has resulted in urging its supporters throughout the world into what can be described as autonomous jihad in their places of residence by using any means at their disposal during major social, political, sporting, religious and cultural events. We see an increase in the number of suicide attackers who use improvised explosive devices, vehicles and drones laden with explosives. Such tactics now widely prevail, thereby causing serious damage, exacerbated by the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters. The latter have acquired practical skills in conducting mine and explosive warfare and military operations in highly concentrated urban areas. Alarming, members of militants' families, especially women and children, are being used for the ill-intentioned ends of terrorists to spread radical ideology and facilitate, or even carry out, lethal terrorist acts.

As we heard today, Central Asia constitutes a potential target of terrorist activities. As noted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/770), the greatest threat to the region comes from the largest terrorist groups in the north of Afghanistan, owing to the inflow of militants from Syria and Iraq with the aim of transferring terrorist activities to the region and beyond. Driven out of Iraq, they see Afghanistan as a springboard for the creation of a world Islamic caliphate — an expansion of the so-called Wilayat Khorasan, comprised of foreign terrorist fighters, former members of the Taliban, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement and others. Therefore, international terrorist organizations will attempt to infiltrate and incite terrorist activity in Central Asia. That process

is facilitated by the dissemination of terrorist ideology to radicalize vulnerable segments of society in Central Asian countries, thereby leading to the spread of various unconventional religious movements in Islam the adherents of which are a recruiting base for replenishing the ranks of terrorists.

Furthermore, in the light of ISIL's weakened position, the authority of Al-Qaida and its regional branches is gradually growing, thereby creating another dangerous front in the fight against terrorism. In that context, Kazakhstan calls making every effort to consolidate international, regional and national counter-terrorism systems. Considerable attention should be paid to preventing the spread of terrorism and extremism, especially among young people, as a priority.

At the regional level, Kazakhstan actively carries out the Joint Plan of Action for the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, by addressing all four of its pillars. The third phase of the regional Joint Plan of Action for implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia was successfully launched by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), the Office of Counter-Terrorism and CTED in May in Ashgabat. Kazakhstan was the first country to provide financial support for its activities. We thank other donor countries — first and foremost the Russian Federation — for their financial contributions. One of the first events in the framework of the Joint Plan was a regional workshop — on the theme "Addressing conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism and terrorism" — organized by the UNRCCA and the Office of Counter-Terrorism in Astana in May.

To address present-day challenges, Kazakhstan reiterates the steps it proposed at the High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held in New York in June: first, the adoption of the code of conduct to achieve a world free of terrorism, initiated by Kazakhstan, as a multilateral political commitment of the States Members of the United Nations to engage in a collective fight against terrorism through concerted efforts; second, placing under rigorous control, and eventually halting, drug trafficking, the illegal trade in natural resources and cultural artefacts and the use of new technologies and payment modalities, which are the main sources of financing terrorism; thirdly, sharing experiences

and best practices among Member States to prevent all forms of terrorism, including countering the financing of terrorism and identifying terrorist threats in cyberspace, together with protecting critical infrastructure; fourthly, enhancing the sharing of biometric information on terrorists among regional and international databases in order to obtain timely information about groups and individuals with destructive intentions; fifthly, establishing an exchange of best practices on forensics and the suppression of terrorist ideas on the Internet — it is equally critical to counteract activities in cyberspace — sixth, taking proactive measures to counter self-radicalization and prevent the recruitment of citizens by extremist organizations; and, seventh, ensuring sustainable economic development to complement security efforts in order to provide a meaningful alternative for young people in particular.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Kazakhstan's support for the efforts of the Office of Counter-Terrorism to establish a global network of national counter-terrorism coordinators under the auspices of the United Nations, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We are committed to fully engaging in multilateral efforts to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important meeting. I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Voronkov, Executive Director Coninx and Ms. Cook for their informative briefings. We are particularly pleased to see Ms. Cook here today, as the insights of research institutions and civil society organizations are extremely valuable to our understanding of how to best address the evolving threat of terrorism. I thank her for her presentation. Civil society is often best placed to identify the risks of radicalization, which, if not prevented, can lead to violent extremism and terrorism. The collaboration between the United Nations and civil society should therefore be further strengthened. In that regard, we appreciate Under-Secretary-General Voronkov's ongoing efforts to increase cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and civil society.

The links between terrorism and conflict are clear. Although the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant has been pushed back considerably, it remains locally embedded in a number of protracted conflicts — for example, in Afghanistan and Libya. Efforts to combat terrorism cannot therefore be viewed in isolation but

must be seen within our broader efforts to resolve and prevent conflicts and promote peace. To fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the sustaining peace agenda should be at the core of those efforts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a longer-term endeavour, but remain the key to preventing violent extremism, which should be our first priority. The SDGs are relevant to that agenda in many aspects, not least by generating hope. Ensuring the sustainability of the financial system, as reflected in SDG 16, is directly related to countering the financing of terrorism, which is decisive in the fight against terrorism. My Minister of Justice took part in the No Money for Terror conference, held in Paris in April, and we have undertaken significant domestic reforms in that area. We stand ready to take part in efforts at all levels — global, regional and national — to further improve the system to cut off access to financing, through the collective efforts of the United Nations, the Financial Action Task Force and the European Union.

Ensuring accountability should be another essential part of our efforts to counter terrorism. We are concerned in particular about the continued failure to prosecute in cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual slavery, perpetrated by terrorist organizations. The perpetrators of such horrendous crimes must be held to account. It is not only important to deter further such acts, but also to ensure that justice is served for the countless number of victims of terrorism. We welcome the fact that Tuesday marked the first International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism.

We are pleased to see increased attention to both the gender dimension and to children's rights in the fight against terrorism. Ms. Cook's briefing has reminded us that those issues deserve greater attention. For example, it is important that we develop rehabilitation and reintegration programmes that are tailored to children and gender-sensitive.

Let me take this opportunity to highlight some of our national counter-terrorism experiences that we think could serve as an inspiration to others.

Last year, our national coordinator against violent extremism presented a report on our efforts. A key finding in the report was that municipalities were in need of greater capacity and support to address the challenges of violent extremism at the local level. Therefore, the Swedish Centre for Preventing Violent Extremism was established to support the municipalities in their

work to counter and prevent violent extremism — with knowledge, research and good examples. In addition, municipalities have now appointed local coordinators to help strengthen cooperation between local and national levels and access State funding for programmes to prevent extremism.

Another report on children's involvement in violent extremism, which was presented by the Ombudsman for Children in Sweden earlier this year, showed that there is a need to listen more to children's experiences to ensure their successful reintegration into society. As a result, social services have issued recommendations on how to deal with returnees and their families, which are now being implemented.

Although local, national and regional efforts are important, international cooperation also remains central if we are to be successful in our counter-terrorism efforts. The first-ever High-Level Conference for Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, which was successfully held at the end of June this year, was very useful in facilitating such cooperation. Some of the most valuable contributions during that Conference came from civil society representatives. That is why we stress the importance of having civil society present at future meetings, without limitations.

Let me conclude by reiterating that all measures against terrorism must be taken in compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. Respect for human rights must never be ignored in the fight against terrorism.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Vladimir Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Michèle Coninsx for their briefings on the seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat. We found the report very comprehensive and informative. We also thank the Secretary-General for making counter-terrorism one of his priorities. I would also like to thank Ms. Cook for her contribution.

As we have been discussing in the Security Council, military pressure has resulted in strategic setbacks for ISIL on the main battleground, and the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/770) rightly states

that, starting at the end of 2017, ISIL was defeated in Iraq and was in a headlong retreat in the Syrian Arab Republic. As a result, the flow of foreign terrorist fighters towards ISIL in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic has essentially come to a halt. That has obviously damaged its global propaganda machinery and slowed its sources of revenue. These points have also been rightly underlined by the briefers.

Nonetheless, we feel it is only wise not to go overboard and declare victory over terror. The threat posed by terrorism will continue to be a big challenge in the light of what is stated in the report and what we have just heard from the briefings. The report rightly states that the ongoing transformation of ISIL from a territorial entity to a covert network, the activities of its regional affiliates and the threat posed by returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters remain huge challenges.

Obviously, returnees and relocated fighters from the conflict zones to other regions now present a considerable threat to international security. These examples show that, although notable progress has been made in defeating ISIL on the battle field, significant challenges to countering existing threats persist. All of those challenges require the proper implementation of United Nations resolutions and, more important, collaboration and cooperation at all levels among States and non-State entities.

We also note from the report the ever-growing threat posed by ISIL and its affiliated fighters and sympathizers and foreign terrorist fighters in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Central and South Asia, and South-East Asia. In that context, the response of the United Nations, Member States and other stakeholders to the evolving threats in the areas of countering terrorist financing, ensuring border management and law enforcement, securing international judicial cooperation, prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration, countering terrorist narratives and engaging communities are all very important.

Africa remains highly affected by terrorism and violent extremism. We are seeing what is happening in North and West Africa, the Sahel region and East Africa, where ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates and sympathizers continue to pose serious threats to peace and security. With regard to East Africa, Al-Shabaab, an Al-Qaida affiliate, remains a potent threat to peace and security in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. But

we are also seeing the emergence of ISIL affiliates operating in Somalia that are controlled and directed from the central command in Puntland, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. Reports by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development also reinforce those findings and provide useful insights.

ISIL in Libya remains a threat to the country and the wider region. Insecurity in the country creates safe havens for terrorists, which, in turn, affects neighbouring countries. According to the report, and despite the lack of concrete evidence, there is a possibility that terrorists in North Africa are directly involved in trafficking in drugs or persons. If proved true, this issue will indeed remain a huge concern. In West Africa, groups such as the Islamic State in Greater Sahara and Islamic State's West African Province, or Boko Haram, are active, while the threat posed by ISIL-related groups and Al-Qaida affiliates in the region continues to be a big challenge.

We would like to reiterate that restoring peace and stability in Libya, Mali and the Lake Chad basin is indeed critical to denying terrorist groups safe haven. Enhancing the capacity of countries members of the Group of Five for the Sahel and of the Lake Chad region will continue to be very important in countering terrorists operating in the wider region. That is also why it is so critical that we get the management of security right in Somalia as we embark upon the transition from the African Union Military Observer Mission in Somalia to Somali security forces.

The enormous challenge we face in the fight against terrorism should compel us to forge meaningful cooperation at all levels. The full implementation of existing international legal frameworks against ISIL and foreign terrorist fighters by all Member States is vital to strengthening international cooperation. In that regard, we would like to reiterate that developing countries will continue to face huge difficulties to properly implementing those legal frameworks because of limitations of capacity in various areas. Shortcomings that might be observed are not, by and large, the result of a lack of commitment but rather a lack of the required resources and technical and other related capacities — too many to recount here.

Therefore, in addition to forging the necessary cooperation at all levels, the delivery of capacity-building and technical assistance will be critical for the effective implementation of those legal frameworks.

We also agree on the need for enhanced coordination between the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, as well as among all relevant bodies mandated by the Security Council and the General Assembly in their efforts to support Member States in countering the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to join others in congratulating Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism; Ms. Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate; and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, for their informative briefings.

My delegation notes with deep concern that, despite the military and strategic setbacks they have suffered, Da'esh and its associated individuals, groups, businesses and entities continue to pose a serious threat to world peace and security. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the determination of the United Nations and its constant support to Member States to meet the persistent challenge of the fight against terrorism within the framework of a comprehensive and coordinated approach.

According to the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/770), many challenges remain, including the gradual transformation of Da'esh into a nexus of franchises, as well as the threat posed by the return and relocation of foreign terrorist fighters. In addition, Da'esh and its associated groups are using new information and communication technologies, which further complicate the fight against terrorist group financing, recruitment and propaganda activities. These new challenges force States to refine and coordinate their tools and responses to match the scale of the scourge.

My delegation notes with concern that the actions of Da'esh affect the entire world. In Africa, a significant number of combatants affiliated with Da'esh remain very active in Somalia, in the greater Sahel and in West and North Africa, notably in Egypt and Libya, where there are 3,000 to 4,000 foreign terrorist fighters. Terrorist groups continue their destabilization activities through increasingly sophisticated armed attacks. They also have expanded their control over smuggling routes

and hamper the free movement of goods and people in affected areas. In Africa, for example, States already weakened by all manner of difficulties will be forced to allocate a significant part of their budgets to combating their enemies in asymmetrical wars that undermine their development efforts.

In view of that situation, Côte d'Ivoire urges solidarity and cooperation among all actors and advocates an improvement in national and regional counter-terrorism capacities. In that regard, we welcome the signing, on 23 February, of the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Pact, a framework for cooperation among the heads of United Nations entities responsible for combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism. My country also welcomes the strengthening of cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, through high-level bilateral consultations in the regions most affected by terrorism and violent extremism.

Such cooperation is essential and enables the follow-up of the evaluation visits in order to ensure that the technical assistance proposed meets the recommendations and targets the priority needs of each State. My delegation welcomes the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly, on 26 June, of resolution 72/284, on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with a view to defeating terrorism through cooperation.

Lastly, my country welcomed the conclusions of the first High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held on 28 and 29 June at Headquarters. The meeting provided a forum for exchanges on strengthening multilateral cooperation, including innovative public-private partnerships, so as to improve the sharing of sensitive information.

The fight against terrorism is undeniably a national and international security emergency. No matter how well developed, the security responses proposed by current counter-terrorism strategies will be truly effective only if they are bolstered by bold policies to combat poverty and youth unemployment, which are sources of radicalization and violent extremism. Côte d'Ivoire is therefore of the opinion that terrorist movements leave us no choice but to pool our means of fighting them, within the framework of coherent and coordinated strategies for the fight.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first of all welcome the presence of Secretary of State Hunt and the manner in which he has been leading today's meeting, which has brought us together to address the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security. We are grateful he has convened this meeting owing to the importance of the issue.

I would also like to join previous speakers in thanking Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Ms. Michèle Coninx, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, and Ms. Joana Cook, Senior Research Fellow of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, for their informative briefings on the threat posed by Da'esh.

The seventh report (S/2018/770) of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Da'esh to international peace and security, which we are discussing at today's meeting, confirms that, despite its diminished financial resources and although weakened at its core and less active, Da'esh remains a global threat with repercussions on all continents and subregions. The evolution of Da'esh from a proto-State structure into a covert and decentralized network is facilitated by its regional affiliates and its network of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters, including women and children, and by a new and deplorable phenomenon of suicide attacks involving the use of entire families.

It should be stressed that the partial defeats that Da'esh has suffered in both Iraq and Syria must not be allowed to mislead us. The growing presence in Africa of foreign terrorist fighters coming from the Middle East is helping to strengthen the resolve, strategies and financial means of their affiliates in North Africa, the Sahel and Sahara regions, the Lake Chad basin and East Africa. Its mobility will also affect the growing collaboration between it and its affiliates with other terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. In Africa in particular, these circumstances, together with unequal development among countries, poverty, the inequitable access to opportunities, especially for young people and women, the increased circulation of small arms and ammunition as a result of the crisis in Libya, and the existence of displaced persons, are the causes of growing complexity of protracted conflicts on the continent.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea applauds and encourages the various efforts being made to ensure better coordination of the United Nations system in the fight against terrorism, the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Pact, and the continued strengthening of collaboration between the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, and among the Counter-Terrorism sanctions committees, *inter alia*. We also appreciate the efforts of Member States to counter terrorism to the best of their ability, and reiterate the obligation to respect national sovereignty, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, so as to prevent and neutralize the structural causes that led to the formation and expansion of Da'esh in Africa and the Middle East. In that regard, we would like to make three suggestions that we believe complement the ongoing global efforts against Da'esh and terrorism.

First, we believe that it is extremely important to eliminate safe havens and "black spots" in the fight against terrorism, in order to limit the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and the expansionist plans of Da'esh and its affiliates. It is critical to identify regions and States where, for whatever reason, the implementation of counter-terrorism resolutions is limited, which includes preventing violent extremism, establishing legal structures, protecting borders, including sea borders, and stopping the financing of terrorism, among other priorities. In that regard, we commend joint actions undertaken this year in Central Asia by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Office of Counter-Terrorism, and encourage similar efforts and research projects in Africa. We would also like to highlight the Arria Formula meeting that Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, the United States, Ethiopia and the Netherlands, with the collaboration of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, organized in June on the subject of transnational organized crime at sea and how it is currently taking place in different parts of the world, which served to underscore how this phenomenon may, in some instances, represent a threat to regional and/or international peace and security.

Secondly, we believe it is crucial to recognize the need to invest in addressing the root causes of conflict, and therefore in sustainable and equitable development and peace. In that context, a powerful counter-narrative to the Da'esh narrative could be generated, especially

through, inter alia, the empowerment of women and youth, investment in education and the creation of labour markets. Accordingly, we welcome the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/72/840, on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which, thanks to its reaffirmation by consensus at the sixth review of the Global Strategy in June, will enable us to follow up on those activities and better understand their collective impact.

Thirdly, we believe that strengthening existing counter-terrorism partnerships, as well as coordination among them, is key. This is a challenge we can solve only if we are united and share information and experiences, thereby strengthening alliances and their effectiveness against Da'esh.

Equatorial Guinea is one of the main investors in the Central Office of the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa, in which the Heads of African intelligence and security Services participate, which assists the African Union and all its institutions in matters of peace and security. We believe that the importance of that forum is crucial to fostering cooperation and brotherhood among countries against terrorist groups, including Da'esh. In that regard, we commend the success of the High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States, held last June, and call for similar events to be held in future. We also encourage support for the joint efforts of the African Union and the United Nations in the fight against Da'esh and terrorism in Africa.

Finally, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea reiterates the position of the African Union, which believes that terrorism and violent extremism represent one of the most dangerous threats to peace, security and sustainable development in Africa and the world. In that regard, we reaffirm our commitment to the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful for the convening of today's briefing. We thank Mr. Voronkov and Ms. Coninx for their detailed analysis of the situation with regard to combating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). We note the active efforts of the bodies that they head in preparing the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the issue (S/2018/770). We listened with interest to the briefing by Ms. Cook.

Amid the military and territorial losses, the destruction of the economic infrastructure, the weakening of the propaganda machine and the demoralization of the fighters, the group's leadership seeks any opportunity to maintain its influence. The global terrorist Tower of Babel has collapsed. However, ISIS cells continue to speak with one voice and to successfully coordinate among themselves. Following the destruction of the hydrocarbon smuggling network, terrorists have turned to new sources of financial and logistical support.

There have been reported incidents of speculation on stock markets, and the terrorists strive to invest funds in the legal sectors of the economies of a wide range of countries. The supporters of ISIS actively invest in tourism, hospitality, industry, agriculture, fish farms, pharmacology and construction companies. The group also continues to fight for control of drug-smuggling routes, including in Afghanistan. Furthermore, ISIS continues to receive funds from foreign sponsors cooperating under the cover of philanthropic foundations, religious groups and other non-governmental organizations.

We note with satisfaction that the starting point of the report presented today was an acknowledgement of the success of the Syrian army in combating terrorism. That was evident in the intense fight against ISIS in the suburbs of Damascus. At the same time, there has been progress far beyond the boundaries of the Syrian capital. With the support of the Russian armed forces, more than 1,400 towns and cities have been liberated from the presence of terrorists. More than 96 per cent of the Syrian territory has now been brought under the control of Government forces and the people's militia units. As a result, more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees have already been able to return to their homes. At the same time, we do not overlook the possibility of an increasing number of terrorist sleeper cells in Syria. The supporters of ISIS are doing their utmost. They actively recruit minors, including children under the age of 12 years, to carry out terrorist attacks. It is entirely possible that terrorist attacks will become more frequent, in particular in the area of Idlib. Furthermore, there is an increasing likelihood of the threat of ISIS in Afghanistan, where, according to various reports, there are 4,000 to 10,000 active members of that group, a significant number of whom are in the areas bordering the Central Asian States.

In parallel with the military defeat of ISIS, it is necessary to most effectively address the issue of holding radical elements to account. In that context, it behoves us to raise the issue of the inadmissibility of attempts to supplant the functions of Syrian Government's counter-terrorism bodies. As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, in parallel with Government forces, arrests of ISIS members are also being carried out by certain armed entities. We would like to receive more detailed information. Who specifically is undertaking such tasks and on what basis? What is the fate of the detainees? Are there plans to hand them over to the authorities? We trust that we will receive answers from the specialized Security Council committees without having to await the issuance of the next report.

I would reiterate that, ultimately, all those who provide direct or indirect assistance to terrorists, not to mention the fighters themselves, must be held to account. However, the collection, processing and transfer of evidence to judicial bodies must be done strictly in accordance with international law and with full respect for the sovereignty of the States where ISIS perpetrated the crimes. If that factor is not taken into account, not a single initiative to investigate terrorist crimes can claim to be legitimate. For our part, Russian investigative bodies actively participate in such efforts on Syrian soil with the consent of, and in cooperation with, Damascus officials.

During the discussion of the sixth report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/80) in February (see S/PV.8178), the Russian delegation drew attention to the blatant breach of the arms embargo with regard to ISIS. What remains unresolved is the question of how that gang of thugs put together an arsenal of weapons, which for seven years has enabled it essentially to resist the world's largest armies. The current report depicts the situation as if the ISIS fighters are content with merely

what happens to come their way, robbing storage sites in the territories under their control and manufacturing improvised explosive devices. In reality, those terrorists are able to manufacture only a small proportion of the weapons using an improvised method and only their most primitive models. There is increasing evidence of arms being provided from abroad, including through semi-legal structures or even with the support of the intelligence services of certain countries. We trust that there will be a detailed discussion on ways to address that issue during the international conference on countering illegal arms supplies in the context of combating international terrorism, to be held in Moscow on 3 and 4 September.

ISIS activity has decreased, which has enabled Al-Qaida to appear once again, with financing to the tune of \$20 million to \$40 million a month. That group is strengthening its ties with affiliated groups in North Africa. It strives to take control of local criminal businesses and to invest in the agro-industrial holdings of African countries. According to available reports, as ISIS is displaced Al-Qaida and its allies may take on the role of countering international efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict in Syria.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the only way to eliminate the threat posed by ISIS, Al-Qaida and affiliated groups is on a genuinely collective basis. In that regard, we are studying with interest the initiative by the Secretariat leadership to set up a network of counter-terrorist coordinators. We are convinced that strengthening the practical cooperation of the specialized agencies of Member States represents an important factor in establishing a single United Nations-led counter-terrorism coalition on a non-ideological basis, which is something for which we have long called.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.